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THE REMINISCENCES OF
LADY DOROTHY NEVILL



Lady Dorothy Nevill
After a crayon drawing by M. Jules Cayron.

LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD: 1906.

THE REMINISCENCES
OF
LADY DOROTHY NEVILL

EDITED BY HER SON
RALPH NEVILL

WITH PORTRAIT

THIRD IMPRESSION

LONDON
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TO MY DEAR KINSMAN AND CONTEMPORARY
THE MARQUIS OF ABERGAVENNY, K.G.
THIS VOLUME OF TRIFLING REMINISCENCE
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

P R E F A C E

I AM writing these few lines to beg the kindly reader to remember the many difficulties to be encountered in the writing down of the recollections of a long life.

Many of these must of necessity be devoid of interest, whilst much well worth chronicling eludes all memory. As far as possible, I have attempted to recall to mind anything likely to appear amusing or curious about the many clever and delightful people whom it has been my good fortune to meet, and who, alas ! have now for the most part passed away. Many of my reminiscences, I fear, are but trivial and even commonplace, but I have done my best, and therefore feel sure that no unduly harsh criticism will be meted out to one who has lived from the day of the post-chaise into that of the motor-car—a form of locomotion, by the way, to which I am by no means averse.

One or two of my friends have rendered invaluable assistance by reviving memories of past days—to these I tender my sincere thanks ; and now, with every hope that this book will receive a lenient reception, I say good-bye.

D. N.

July, 1906.

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THE REMINISCENCES OF LADY DOROTHY NEVILL

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I WAS born in our family house—No. 11, Berkeley Square. I might call it a historic house, for in it had lived and died Horace Walpole, and here it was that many of the celebrated letters were written. In the doorway there used to be iron gates, put up at the time of the Lord George Gordon riots, but I do not think they are there now.

I remember being told that my eldest brother, who was still a boy at my birth, was very much annoyed at my appearance in this world of tears, for he, being my mother’s favourite, was fearful lest I should appropriate a large part of that love and attention which had been wont to be bestowed upon him; but as matters turned out, we became devoted to one another, and, as he after-

wards said, he found me from first to last a great comfort.

I received the name of Dorothy after that unfortunate lady, Dorothy Townshend, who is still supposed to haunt Rainham. The poor thing was the sister of Sir Robert Walpole and the wife of the first Viscount Townshend, whose principal claim to remembrance is that he first introduced turnips from Germany into the county of Norfolk. Rainham was not far distant from Houghton. At that time nearly all the great county families intermarried with each other, and the three sisters of Sir Robert became the wives of Lord Townshend, Sir Charles Turner of Wareham, and Anthony Hamond of Westacre.

My father was a man of a considerable originality and cleverness. I see him in my mind's eye, dressed in the fashion of those far-off days—nankeen shorts, with white stockings, and a brass-buttoned blue coat with big collar over a beautifully-embroidered waist-coat. He was a small man, with sharp features and an equally sharp tongue, and essentially what the French call *un homme nerveux*, and would fly into what appeared to be (but in reality was not) a great passion upon very slight provocation.

The very fluent vocabulary of denunciation which he had ever ready at command once, I have been told, landed him in a somewhat uncomfortable predicament. He was travelling at night on the Continent alone in a post-chaise, when the post-boy, whilst passing through a forest, began to drive like a man anything but certain of his way. My father's wrath soon rose, and the explosion of strong

language which issued from the carriage so alarmed the driver that, murmuring, ‘Je ne veux pas conduire le diable,’ he pulled up, and having expeditiously unfastened the traces, made off with his horses at a gallop. My father, I believe, passed the whole night alone in the wood, being found late the next day by the driver of a passing *diligence* in a state of fury, hunger, and fatigue.

I well remember his one day declaring that he felt very ill, and must at once see the doctor; but the local practitioner, being a considerable time in making his appearance, found on arriving that his patient, to all intents and purposes, was in perfect health. ‘As far as I can see,’ said he, ‘there is nothing the matter with your lordship.’ ‘Of course there isn’t now,’ snapped my father. ‘Why the deuce didn’t you come directly I sent for you, when there was—that’s when a doctor is wanted; however, you have come too late, as people of your profession always do.’ Nevertheless, he was at heart a kindly man and devoted to his ‘babies,’ as he always called us, and most anxious to cultivate their minds, frequently when in London taking us to museums and other places supposed to instruct the young. I must own to having been bored by these progresses through galleries filled with musty old giraffes and other shockingly stuffed animals, weird creatures which glared at the visitor with glassy eyes—very different from the museums of to-day, where everything is arranged in a scientific manner, and where a real knowledge of natural history may be acquired from the admirably preserved specimens, which in most cases are set up so as to indicate their mode of life.

My father used often to pay us visits in the nursery whilst we were doing our lessons. He would sit in a chair and apparently go to sleep—a slumber, however, instantly broken did we make any mistake, when a terrible rumpus would ensue.

Though fond of sport, he somewhat eccentrically had a great aversion to fox-hunting in Norfolk, where he considered it out of place. The first Lord Hastings once wrote to him thus: ‘Dear Lord Orford,—We are beginning to hunt foxes: will you help us?’ To which the only reply was: ‘Dear Hastings,—I bet you ten to one I kill more foxes than you do.’ And that year he did, for Lord Hastings killed thirty and my father thirty-four!

An ardent but not very successful lover of racing, he trained his racehorses in the park, and it was one of our great amusements to go and see these pretty but somewhat unprofitable creatures.

The two best horses he owned were the Clearwell colt and Ascot, of which great things were expected—indeed, the blue riband of the turf was literally within a few inches of coming to us in 1835, when, after a tremendous struggle, poor Ascot lost the Derby by very little, being beaten on the post by Mr. Bowes’ Mundig. On this occasion Elnathan Flatman, known as ‘Nat,’ a jockey of very high reputation, rode for my father, whilst the winning horse was piloted to victory by the celebrated Bill Scott. As illustrating the closeness of the finish, a great sporting authority of the day used to tell the following story: ‘When Mundig ran for the Derby, Lord Chesterfield lent John Scott, the trainer, a

hard-mouthinged pony, which at the crucial moment of the great race cannoned against a carriage near the winning-post. Just then Lord Jersey rode up and said : "Well, John, I'm sorry for you : Ascot's won." "Now't of the sort," shouted a lad ; "the old beggar in black (Mr. Bowes' colours) has won." "Has he ?" said John. "You're the man for my money," and flung him half a crown.' Bill Scott used to say that he had never ridden a more severe race, and declared that he had to keep on shouting to 'Nat' as loud as he could not to allow his colt to hang on to him. As a matter of fact, I have been told that in the next stride Ascot would have won.

There was, of course, no telegraph in those days, and I well remember walking with my mother and governess across the park at Wolterton to meet the stud groom, Jacobs by name, a worthy person whose chief qualification for the task of training my father's horses lay in his having conspicuously failed as a farmer. We guessed the worst from his dejected air—an anticipation quickly confirmed by the words, 'His lordship beat by half a neck.' It was a sad day for all of us, and I should think the following Monday sadder still for my father, who must have lost very considerably over this race.

In 1833 he had been more lucky, for in that year he had won the Two Thousand Guineas with Clearwell, Lord Exeter's Emmeline colt being second. This race was only won by Robinson's fine riding and the Emmeline colt's fixed determination to swerve all over the course. Sixty yards from home the colt in question was leading by two lengths, and, as an eye-witness put it, if the

Emmeline colt had taken half the pains to keep on the course which he took to get off it, he must have won with the greatest ease.

The only other race of any importance which my father secured was the One Thousand Guineas of 1850, which was won for him by a filly by Slane out of Exotic. It was brilliantly ridden by Frank Butler, who managed to secure a favourable verdict by the distance of a very short head.

On the whole, we were very unlucky with our horses. Poor Clearwell, for instance, did not do the great things expected of him, and finally ended his life in a very prosaic manner. My father used to back his horses for very large amounts, generally with a disastrous result; yet, in spite of this, no reverses were able to shake his devotion to the turf, of which he continued to be an ardent votary, whilst ever gaining nothing and losing much. Besides expending considerable sums in this way, he got rid of mints of money in elections, for he was one of the old-fashioned Tories of the day. This, however, unlike racing, produced some return, for he had great power in the county of Norfolk, which at that time had not developed those Radical tendencies which now characterize it.

Long ago I made a bet of £5 that not a single Liberal would come in for the divisions of Norfolk, and only lost it by one Liberal being returned by a majority of a solitary vote! Now, were I inclined to wager, I should always bet on the success of the Liberals, so Radical has the whole county become!

My father hated railways, and never went by them if he could help it, always driving up to

London. He did all he could to prevent the line coming near his property—a short-sighted policy which did the estate no good in the end.

In the days before railways, country house visitors were few and far between, for going into the country from London was a serious business. When visits were paid they were long ones, as was but natural, yet even at the best of times they were doubtful pleasures.

It took us two long days to get to Wolterton, and the cost must have been considerable. We went in the family coach with four post-horses, whilst two fourgons conveyed the luggage. Ladies at that time were too aristocratic to go in any conveyance but their own carriage with post-horses. I remember a story that my great-grandmother, who never drove out but in a carriage and four with outriders, one day met with a mishap, her coach breaking down. In this terrible state of affairs no one knew what to do, my grandmother sitting, ruffled but dignified, in the carriage, the wheels of which seemed damaged beyond repair. Matters seemed at a complete standstill, till a servant of a daringly brilliant and inventive turn of mind ventured to suggest that her ladyship might possibly walk to her mansion, not far away; and, wonderful to relate, she actually managed to do it. As a matter of fact, the huge hoops which were at that time fashionable rendered exercise almost impossible for ladies.

I remember a wonderful old lady who used to live near us, at Blickling, when I was a child—Lady Suffield—(of another branch of the Harbord family: Blickling went from her to her nephew, the

then Marquis of Lothian). She used to be very kind to my sister and myself, but we could never quite get over the alarm which her mob-cap and severe look aroused—a tremendous personage, indeed, the queen of that part of Norfolk. When she went to the great ball at the county town (Aylsham), she it was who always gave the first cut to the grand cake made in her honour, in those days a feature of such entertainments. Considerable ceremony used to attend this act, and it was with great dignity that the ‘Double Dow,’ as this old lady was nicknamed, used to advance to its performance, whilst the whole of the local gentry preserved an almost solemn silence. She was on excellent terms with my father, to whom she gave her portrait, by Sir Thomas Lawrence. I believe that it now hangs at Blickling, having been bought at the Wolterton sale.

The ‘Double Dow’ was a typical lady of the old school; with railroads she would have nothing at all to do, always driving up to London in her coach and four.

About this time an incident occurred which afterwards made a considerable impression upon my youthful mind. One evening my father was in the nursery with us when a servant came and announced that a Mr. Jermy had arrived, saying he had been invited to stay a few days. My father was much puzzled, and declared that there must be some mistake, as he knew no one of such a name. However, on inquiry it turned out that this gentleman had just changed his name to Jermy from another, under which he had been asked to stay by my

father ; so all went well, and Mr. Jermy proved a most pleasant companion. Little did we think that our visitor was to meet his death at the hands of an individual whom we were then constantly seeing ! He and his son were some years later murdered by Rush, who used to live in a house in our village near Wolterton, where as children, driving in our pony cart, my sister and I often pulled up, for we were always certain of a present of sweets. I remember Rush perfectly—he was a somewhat common but good-natured sort of man—also well do I recall the tremendous sensation which the tragedy created in Norfolk.

My father was devoted to my sister, Rachel, and myself, and, oddly enough, old-fashioned and conservative as he was, desired above all things that we should be educated up to a standard not much known or appreciated in those days, when, although golf, croquet, and motors did not exist to disturb the girlish mind, no particular care was given to the education of young ladies. We had a most delightful governess, Miss Redgrave, about whom I shall have something to say later on. She came to us when I was five, and left me only at my marriage. With her we read, amongst other books, ‘*Les Oraisons Funèbres de Bossuet*,’ the works of Fénelon, ‘*L’Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne*,’ by Barente, Sismondi’s ‘*Histoire des Français*,’ and La Harpe’s History—in fact, we were educated on much the same lines as Lady Jane Grey, with a female ‘Roger Ascham’ to guide us, though I fear, alas ! we did not profit by this careful education as much as we ought to have done. As children, we were devoted to riding, and

much of our time, when not engaged in the studies I have mentioned, was passed in the saddle.

Our family place in Norfolk—Wolterton Hall—was built by the first Lord Walpole, of Wolterton, who was ambassador to Louis XV., and therefore well acquainted with the splendours of Versailles. He was a man of considerable taste, and in due course employed Ripley, the architect of Houghton, whom Pope so unmercifully handled, to build him a country seat.

‘Heaven visits with a Taste the wealthy fool,
And needs no rod but Ripley, with a rule.’

Notwithstanding the sneers of the poet, Ripley erected a very fine mansion, the state-rooms of which are of noble proportions. The house, indeed, is a kind of smaller Houghton. On the first floor are (I can say ‘are,’ for they are now again restored to something of their old splendid appearance) six reception-rooms and royal bedchamber, all connected with a fine marble hall, which was the original entrance till the outer staircase was removed; the mantelpieces in all of these rooms are of extraordinary beauty. The furniture, pictures—in fact, practically the whole of the dining-room—were presented to Lord Walpole by Caroline, wife of George II. For the pictures—portraits of herself and her family—she gave some finely-carved frames.

Alas! at a calamitous sale, which took place about fifty years ago, these treasures were torn from the walls and sold. In all probability the portraits of these royal ladies are now serving as ancestresses to some American or Semitic millionaire! For many

years Wolterton was abandoned as a residence and left to desolation and decay, but shortly after my nephew, the present Lord Orford, succeeded to the estate, he decided to return to the home of his ancestors, and during the last few years has done everything in his power to restore the house to its old state and replace as many of the contents as can be gathered together—a difficult task, in which, however, owing to untiring effort, he has been extremely successful.

Amongst other pictures which I remember in our old home was the famous ‘Rainbow Rubens,’ now in the Wallace Collection, as well as a fine portrait of Cardinal Fleury and another of Pope—both presents from the Cardinal and the poet to Lord Walpole.

My father was devoted to the place and did a great deal to it, though occasionally he was injudicious in his alterations. For instance, he took out the old Georgian casements and substituted large panes of glass. He also performed a feat which I think, in its way, is almost unique. A very large picture hung at Wolterton, representing the Ambassador Walpole, with his wife and family, which for some reason or other my father determined to cut up; and this he proceeded to do, making out of it some three or four smaller pictures. The result of this curious operation, oddly enough, was not so disastrous as might be imagined, and the pictures produced by it bear every appearance of having been separately painted.

There was at Wolterton a Nelson room, in which the great Admiral had slept whilst on a visit. Nelson’s picture — a personal gift — painted by

Lane, is now, unfortunately, lost to us for ever, for it was burnt in the great fire at the Pantechnicon, where it had been deposited for safe keeping.

One of the best and most interesting of the portraits was, I remember, Louis XV., by Van Loo, given by that King—as the inscription on the superb frame states—to the Ambassador, a delightful remembrance of the splendid times of the *ancien régime*. Lord Walpole was the intimate friend of Cardinal Fleury, and, in consequence, enjoyed great popularity at the Court of Versailles. He himself, though, like Sir Robert, a sturdy Norfolkian and thoroughly English in character, had married a Frenchwoman, Marie Magdalene Lombard, the daughter of Pierre Lombard, a wealthy Protestant refugee, who had fled from Nîmes at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He brought over a good deal of his wealth in the convenient form of diamonds, some of which I still have in my possession to-day.

There was a good library at Wolterton, in which I used to delight. One of its principal treasures was a copy of Pope's works, which the poet had presented to Lord Walpole as a grateful recognition of his kindness in having rendered some assistance to a friend of his, a Catholic priest; and there was also a quaint manuscript diary written by my ancestress, Sophia Churchill, from which an extract is given at the end of this volume. My father was very fond of birds, and the lawns and pastures used to be enlivened by the presence of golden pheasants and other feathered pets of brilliant plumage. Now once again these lawns and walks, where I played as a child, are resuming something of their old

appearance, after forty years of neglect and destruction ; my nephew, the present Lord Orford, as I have before said, having piously devoted much time, thought, and money to restoring the home of his forefathers to its original state.

There is a family ghost at Wolterton, which at intervals is seen by old servants about the place. A white lady is said to be in the habit of appearing whenever some calamity is about to threaten our family. Some little time before my brother, the late Lord Orford, died, in 1894, I well recollect his saying to me, ‘I hear from Norfolk that the white lady has been seen again. It is you or I this time, Dolly, for we are the only ones left ?’

The white lady in question is supposed to be one of the Scamler family, who were the possessors of Wolterton before my ancestor built the present mansion. There used to be some story that one of the Lords Orford unearthed the old tombstones of the Scamlers in the ruined church in Wolterton Park, and that this act of sacrilege was the cause of the poor lady’s spirit being so disturbed. But I have recently discovered that no act of this kind was ever perpetrated at all, so it must be for some other reason that the ghostly dame lingers about Wolterton Hall. In old days the Walpoles used to be driven in their hearse three times around this ruined church before being laid to rest in the family vault. Certainly Lady Walpole of Wolterton (Pierre Lombard’s daughter) was buried with this ceremonial. A ghost of much more tragic mien is supposed to haunt Mannington, another house close by, at which my brother used to live, for there it was that

Dr. Jessop (who writes so delightfully of the Norfolk of other days) declared that he had seen the ghost of Henry Walpole, the Jesuit. The whole story was told in the *Athenaeum*.

Ghost stories sometimes have queer origins. Felbrigge Hall, some few miles from Cromer, and formerly the seat of the Windhams, was purchased from the last but one of that family by a gentleman from Norwich, who some time afterwards, being in ill-health, always became very restless at night, which restlessness caused the old servants on the estate to declare that the reason their master was so often heard roaming about the old house was that the ghosts of the Windhams would not suffer the purchaser of their ancestral home to rest. Alas that such a picturesque story should in reality have had a very prosaic origin !

The Windham who sold Felbrigge Hall was the celebrated 'Mad Windham,' whose eccentricities were at one time the talk of Norfolk. I remember his parents at Felbrigge, and the eccentric way in which their son was brought up, being kept entirely with the stablemen, and, indeed, when a child, dressed as a page-boy, and occasionally made to wait at table in that costume ! The result of his education, or rather lack of it, was disastrous, and as he grew up 'Mad Windham' cared only for low society. At one time he insisted upon acting as a railway guard upon a local line; at another he started a coach to convey people to Norwich, playing the part of coachman to the life, but refusing to accept any fares. Eccentricity followed upon eccentricity, till at last came the crash, and the beautiful

old family place, with its chapel containing the tombs of countless Windhams and the de Felbrigges, from whom they sprang, passed into other hands. The chapel is in the park, and contains the famous brass to the memory of Sir Simon de Felbrigge, standard-bearer to Richard Cœur de Lion. Well might 'Mad Windham' have sung :

'Mes aieux, c'était bien la peine,
La lance au poing, le casque au front,
De vous en aller par la plaine,
De vous en aller par le mont,
Et d'écrire, à force de gloire
Et de coups d'estoc triomphants,
Votre nom—le mien—dans l'histoire
Qu'on fait lire aux petits enfants.
Mes aieux, c'était bien la peine,
Pour qu'un jour un petit crevé,
Un jour qu'il était en déveine,
Un jour qu'il était decavé,
Vendit la plaine et la montagne,
La ferme et le manoir altier,
Pour avoir trop bu de champagne
Avec des filles de portier !'

Felbrigge was gone, but another property, Hanworth, still remained to him. A local prophecy had been handed down from generation to generation, which declared that Hanworth and Felbrigge should never belong to the same owner, and this prediction was indeed verified. Not so very long after the Hanworth property came into the Windham family, the spendthrift appeared, who at once involved the estate in difficulties, with the result that money had to be raised, when it was discovered that such land as it was possible to sell must of necessity include

Felbrigge Hall itself. A good deal of the rest of the estate marching with that of Hanworth could not be alienated from the family, and to this, after much costly litigation, succeeded 'Mad Windham's' son, who died some few years ago.

CHAPTER II

An election in old days—An unwilling candidate—My brother—His friendship with Mr. Disraeli—Tenants and landlords of the past—Our journey abroad—A cavalcade—Munich—King Ludwig of Bavaria—Count Mongelas—A strange game—Sir George Hayter and his laurels—Vizcena—Taking the black veil.

IN the days of my childhood a peer and large landed proprietor could do pretty much as he liked in the way of nominating Members of Parliament in the county in which his sphere of influence lay, and my father, a staunch Tory of the olden school, in due course determined that my eldest brother should enter the House of Commons. This the latter was most averse to doing, for he cared absolutely nothing about politics, and much preferred travelling on the Continent, especially in Italy, of which he was very fond. Not that he was by any means a stupid or ignorant man—far from it; he was exceedingly cultured and of quite unusual mental ability. With this, however, he combined a truly indomitable indolence, which, it must be admitted with regret, he cultivated rather than sought to check. My father, who had a strong will of his own, declared that, whether he liked it or not, his son should be member for North Norfolk; and, as he insisted and gave no sign of

yielding, my brother eventually agreed to stand, making it, however, an especial condition that he should be put to no trouble of any sort, such as speech-making, canvassing, and the like. All of these, to him unpleasant, things were undertaken by a cousin of ours, the Honourable Spencer Walpole (afterwards Home Secretary), who did everything in an admirable manner, and finally, after my brother had duly been declared elected, was actually chaired in his place round the Market Place at Norwich! This chair, used at many old-time elections, was really a sort of elaborate throne—still in existence, I have been told, at the present day reposing in a curiosity shop at Norwich. It seems strange that the authorities of that city should not have taken better care of such a relic.

My brother contrived to stay abroad till the election was over, and, in fact, took not the slightest notice of it till the moment when he entered the House of Commons as one of the members for North Norfolk. As a matter of fact, he only attended about three sittings of that august assembly, and would have attended less had it not been for the persuasion of Mr. Disraeli, who entreated him to vote for certain measures which were then being debated. I dare say, however, that his Parliamentary career was just as useful to the country as that of many other M.P.'s who were regular attendants at the sittings of the House. I remember his telling me, as an illustration of the hollowness and insincerity of politics, that, walking home one night from the House of Commons with a great statesman, who had taken a very strong clerical line in

a heated debate, followed by a division, about some question relating to religion, the latter remarked : 'Well, Walpole, after all, it is curious to think that we have both been voting for an extinct mythology.'

Mr. Disraeli and my brother, notwithstanding their very different tastes, were upon most intimate terms, and I have often heard the former express the warmest admiration for 'Walpole,' whilst expressing regret that the latter's disposition should have nullified his brilliant mental gifts.

Well do I remember the election of which I spoke ! My sister and myself, little girls of eight and ten, rode all about the polling places in the country town near our home, our ponies being decked out with the Conservative colours, which were pink and purple. We headed our father's tenants, whose cheers I still seem to hear, and led them up to the different polls amidst uproarious shouting. After the voting was over, the whole family went into Norwich, where we slept the night, and the next day duly witnessed the chairing of the successful candidate's substitute round the Market Place. It was a scene of somewhat Bacchanalian enthusiasm, and I think everyone was delighted except the Radicals and my brother, who was plunged into the deepest gloom when he received the news of his successful election !

People were merry in those days (the thirties and forties), and farmers were prospering exceedingly ! Many of my father's tenants had held the same farm for generations, and all of them were imbued with great reverence for the old families, who at

that time generally spent a good deal of the year on their estates.

Now all is changed, and rarely indeed does—or, rather, can—a landlord live on his property. In comparative poverty for the most part, the owners of land are forced to let their places—that is, in the event of their being able to keep them at all.

One of my brothers, to my parents' great sorrow, had been born blind, and my father, ever anxious for the welfare of his children, did everything he possibly could to mitigate this affliction, in addition to taking the very best advice that the medical skill of that day could offer. At Munich there resided a famous oculist, Walter by name, and, as a last hope, it was settled that my poor brother should be taken to him, and that most of the family, including my sister and myself, should go too.

This was at a day when railways were in their early youth, and were still regarded as novelties to be viewed with caution, if not suspicion.

I well remember how we were taken to see the one then just completed from Ferte to Nuremberg, and what a great curiosity and wonder it was supposed to be.

When we set out from Antwerp upon our expedition to Munich, we were a large party—six of ourselves, as well as two maids, a footman, and French cook; nor must I forget a wonderful courier, whose principal qualities were external ones—that is to say, his costume was covered with gold and braid, whilst his intelligence was nil. However, one thing he did well, which was to precede our cavalcade and announce the imminent arrival of a great English

milord and his suite. We had two fourgons to hold the *batterie de cuisine* and our six beds, which had to be unpacked and made up every night ; for in those days there were hardly any real hotels in the country through which we travelled—merely houses used as such by the few travellers chancing to come that way. We had, besides, the family coach and a barouche, whilst there were six saddle-horses, with two attendant grooms ! My father delighted in riding with his two little girls, but for my sister and myself—we were but nine and eleven years old —this journey was a real trial of strength, particularly as our papa took his bearings from a map which had no special claims to accuracy, its only merit being that it afforded our party a good deal of excitement by taking us on to private property, the infuriated owners of which would often make themselves extremely disagreeable. In my mind's eye I see one now, and hear his shouts of ‘Zum Richter ! zum Richter !’ (‘To the Judge ! to the Judge !’) indeed, a good deal of soothing diplomacy had sometimes to be called into play.

Peacemaking of this kind delayed us considerably, besides entailing constant trouble and expense.

As I have said before, inns were the exception and fixed tariffs non-existent. Consequently, we were charged most exorbitant prices and swindled in every possible way, for the chance of fleecing an English milord—one of those wealthy ‘Engländer’ who, it was well known, lived absolutely regardless of expense—did not too often occur ; and when it did, an opportunity of such a kind was not to be lost—and in our case certainly was not.

The most monstrous charges used to be made for candles, which, once lit, were priced in the bill at an exorbitant rate. When showing us our rooms the landlords would precede the party with two candles between the fingers of each hand, which, I fancy, was a custom of the eighteenth century. Eventually my father became so infuriated at the enormous charges made for lights that he declared he would at all events not leave the once lit candles behind him to serve as a source of robbery for the next visitors; and therefore for some little time he insisted on taking the candles he had paid for with him, but the box became such a nuisance that he had to abandon the idea.

At Munich we were installed in a magnificent apartment, on the floor above that occupied by the English Ambassador, Lord Erskine. My father did not remain long with us, leaving for England shortly after our arrival, and so we were left with our mother, who went to all the grand festivities of the Bavarian capital, with accounts of which she used to delight her little girls. Very soon we made a number of friends, and used, I remember, to go out to the Palace of King Ludwig, there to play with the King's little girls, the three Bavarian Princesses—Hildegarde, Adelgund, and Frederica. The first two afterwards became Archduchess Albert of Austria and Grand Duchess of Modena, whilst Princess Frederica died unmarried.

Very often when we were playing at the Palace, the old King Ludwig of Bavaria (of Lola Montez memory) would stroll in and join us in our childish games. An extremely cultivated man and a great

patron of the arts, he it was who erected most of the fine buildings in Munich, and made that city a great centre of art and learning.

One of the games we played in which the old King used to join I still remember, and it was of such a quaint kind that a description of it may not be without interest.

A large dish was placed in the centre of the room, and on it was piled a great hillock of flour, in the middle of which was secreted a ring. The fun then began, and consisted in putting one's face into the mound of flour, with the object of catching the ring in one's teeth, and you may imagine our childish delight when the old King took a turn at this game and emerged with his face and shaggy hair all besmeared with flour, without the ring, but enjoying the joke more than anyone else. In those days children did not wear the elaborate dresses which are now almost universal; I fear that such a game as I have described would find but little favour in a modern nursery.

That winter was a very hard one, almost Russian in severity, and sledges were to be seen all over Munich. A good deal of our time was spent in the two great galleries, the Glyptothek and the Peinacotheke, the former being the great sculpture gallery, whilst the latter was given up to pictures. With childish reverence did we regard the guardian of the Glyptothek—a giant dressed in the most gorgeous clothes; he might, indeed, have been a soldier in the great Frederick's famous regiment of giants!

Nearly every morning we were taken to see the

spoils of the King's chase, composed of wild boar, chamois, deer, and every sort of game. Often we went to play with the children of Prince Charles of Bavaria. One of our little playmates afterwards became Empress of Austria, and met with a terrible fate at the hands of a vile wretch, maddened by anarchistic teaching, who, for no reason except sheer lust of slaughter, extinguished this gentle life.

Of her sisters, one became Queen of Naples and another Princess of Thurm and Taxis. They had an English governess, and we were most welcome guests and objects of considerable admiration, as being two little girls who had ridden all the way from Antwerp to Munich, an unprecedented feat of horsemanship—for at that time no German lady ever mounted a horse at all!

Whilst my father was at Munich he had prolonged interviews every evening with old Count Mongelas, who had been Prime Minister of Bavaria in the time of Napoleon the Great, an old Count who at that time had much the same sort of reputation in Bavaria as Bismarck used to have in Germany.* We children were very much bored with these interviews, and were wont to make fun of the old man in the snuff-coloured clothes, likening him to an old vulture, to which bird he certainly bore a great resemblance. His had been a remarkable career; a wonderful tactician and diplomatist, people said that he had upset many of Napoleon's schemes.

At Munich we were constantly seeing Sir George Hayter, the painter, who said to one of us lament-

* My father had been in diplomacy, having acted as chargé d'affaires in Russia in 1812.

ing that a high wind was injuring the laurels : ‘*My* laurels, fortunately, are such as the wind cannot affect.’ Another time, chancing to be seated next my dear governess, Miss Redgrave (a most gifted artist in water-colour), he inquired did she draw, and when she said, ‘Yes, a little,’ retorted ‘A very little, I should think.’ Then, looking into her face, he added, ‘You may draw a little, but you can never paint : your eyes are of the wrong colour.’ Inquiring what the right colour might be, she was told by Sir George, who at the same time fixed upon her a pair of eyes whose verdant hue there was no mistaking : ‘All those who excel in colour invariably have green eyes.’ Sir George Hayter was at that time spending three weeks at Munich, after which he and his ‘laurelled brow’ betook themselves to Berlin, where he had a commission to paint the King of Prussia’s portrait.

From Munich we proceeded to Verona, where we spent a happy fortnight exploring the city and searching into its history and architecture. At the end of that time a quarrel between our Italian and English servants ended in threats and the brandishing of a knife, wherupon my mother, aware of the infirmity of the Italian temperament, thought it more prudent to arrange an immediate removal to Vicenza. My father being, as I have said, absent, she determined to wait in that town till she should receive his directions.

At Vicenza we passed a very dull eight weeks in the depths of winter, and exhausted every object of interest which this very dull place could offer. I do not know what we should have done had the

Austrian officers not taken pity upon us and allowed us to ride in their riding-school. They were very civil, and asked us to a ball, at which I remember each cavalier merely danced one round with a lady, and did not retain his partner for the entire dance. Out of compliment to us, young unmarried ladies were, contrary to custom, allowed to appear at these festivities. At last our imprisonment—for it was little else—came to an end, and we received letters from my father to say that, the Roman season being over, our projected visit to the Eternal City must be abandoned, and we were to proceed to Florence. There we stayed for some little time, and then returned to England.

Whilst speaking of our stay at Florence I must not forget to describe a ceremony which I fancy very few English people have witnessed: this was the taking of the 'black veil' by a young nun. Having obtained an invitation to see it through a friend of my mother's, we went very early to the Church of St. Appollonia, and were placed exactly opposite the small opening where the nun about to pronounce her vows was to appear. After about an hour the officiating Bishop entered the church, and the ceremony began. The 'sposa,' or nun, seemed exceedingly beautiful, with an expression of sweetness which recalled that of Raphael's Madonnas. She looked about twenty, but was in reality a good deal older. At a certain moment during the solemn service an attendant priest presented to the Bishop a salver covered with rose-leaves, on which was the black veil and a silver crown set with the semblance of precious stones. These were placed upon the

nun's head—the victim, as it were, adorned for the sacrifice, whose composed and cheerful air, I must add, entirely removed all painful feelings aroused by the sight of this fair face, so soon to be hidden for ever behind the relentless convent walls.

After it was all over we went to breakfast in the convent, and I well remember the delicious sweets which were distributed after that meal; then at a certain moment some folding doors were thrown open, and the Abbess, the new-made nun, and several others, so hideous and old that she shone like a divinity amongst them, appeared. The nun then gave nosegays to everyone present, and little framed prints of her patron saints to us strangers. Though on a nearer view she appeared less lovely than when seen with all those accessories which the Roman Catholic Church so well understands, she was, nevertheless, very pretty. Kissing us on each cheek at parting, she begged us to come and see her again, as for three days she was to wear her crown and might receive any visitors. We did not fail to do so, but I am bound to say that the wearing of the crown in question, now that the excitement of the ceremonial of 'profession' was over, seemed rather farcical.

On this occasion we had, I remember, a long talk with the Abbess, who told us of the expulsion of the nuns by French troops in the days of Napoleon, her sorrow at quitting the convent, and her joyful return after five years.

Though invited to the concluding ceremonial, at which the newly professed nun lies on the ground covered with a black cloth, while the bell tolls and

the service for the dead is chanted, we were unfortunately unable to go. We did not fail, however, to contribute a trifle towards this final act of consecration, which, we were told, was very expensive. Four other nuns, indeed, said the Abbess, 'professed' at different times, having put off their consecration, so that by uniting it the cost to each might be less.

CHAPTER III

Our life in Dorsetshire—An unrestored church—Buttony—Another journey abroad—The house of the Pretender at Florence—Prince Demidoff—Mr. Watts as a young man—He paints my portrait—Venice—Lord Alvanley and the last of the Foscari—An anecdote of Victor Emmanuel—A ballet for prudes—Andreas Hofer and his son—Return to England.

BESIDES the house in Norfolk, which I have described, my father possessed a very fine old mansion in Dorsetshire—Ilsington Hall—built by Inigo Jones. This had come into the family through Margaret Rolle, in her own right Baroness Clinton and Trefusis, marrying Robert, Earl of Orford, eldest son of Sir Robert Walpole—a most unhappy match it proved, too. One son was born of this marriage—the eccentric George, Earl of Orford, whose extravagances were notorious. He had a mania for driving stags, which one day nearly caused him to be torn to pieces by a pack of hounds he chanced to encounter upon the Newmarket road. Fortunately, he had the presence of mind to put his strange four-in-hand into a gallop, and eventually managed to steer it into an inn-yard just ahead of the pursuing pack. A great patron of sport, he eventually met his death through taking a dive

from a window. A coursing match was going on close by, and, eager to see it, he seems to have been in too great a hurry to adopt the conventional method of going out by the door.

Ilsington House, as I knew it in my youth, was a lovely old mansion; the gardens, which are mentioned in the letters of Horace Walpole, were exceedingly attractive and quaint. My father, unfortunately, made many alterations in the house, which did anything but improve it, and since his time other changes have been carried out, which, in my opinion, have quite robbed it of its former old-world charm. Close by was a dear old church containing many tombs of Crusaders, and also a chapel of the ancient family of Martyn, with several monuments, in which the feet of the recumbent figures rest upon monkeys, the crest which the Martyns bore; tradition declares St. Martin to have been their ancestor. I was much pleased, on a recent visit to Dorsetshire, to find that this venerable church had escaped restoration, and still retains the three-decker and high oak pews of my childhood's recollection. Our old family pew remains untouched, though Ilsington has passed into other hands. Alas! all those who sat in it in former days, except myself, have long gone to their rest.

Chancing on my recent visit to enter the vestry, I found, covered with dust and rubbish, the hatchment of George, Earl of Orford, my eccentric ancestor. On mentioning my discovery to the Vicar, an exceedingly courteous gentleman, he most kindly assured me that, if the assent of the Bishop of the diocese were obtained, I might have it. In due course I contrived to waylay the said

Bishop and obtain his consent. Before giving it, however, he inquired whether I was certain the villagers would not miss it ; but I assured him that we had all been forgotten long ago, and so now the hatchment hangs in its proper place in the Norfolk church where we have all been married and buried.

I can well recollect all the dolefulness of the old-fashioned service. An ‘ orchestra ’ supplied the music, for there was no organ. Installed in the old gallery of the church, it consisted of an old man with a trombone, another with a cracked fiddle, whilst an ancient flute accompanied some children who sang hymns in a discordant Dorset dialect.

The whole service made a most doleful and melancholy impression upon my childish mind, and even now, whenever I hear the ringing of church bells, the youthful dread which this painful ceremony induced recurs to my imagination ! My father, I think, viewed it in much the same way as I did, for it seemed to me that, whenever Sunday came round, he contrived to arrange an ache in some part of his body.

The clergy of that day were very different from what they now are. The Rector of Puddletown was a dear cheery old man, one of the jolly old school, notwithstanding his doleful service. He did his duty according to his own ideas, but at heart I think he loved and lived but for one thing, which was hunting. I remember hearing that on one occasion a funeral had to be kept waiting at the church till his return from a particularly exciting chase.

What lovely rides we used to go, over the sweet

Dorsetshire commons of heather and gorse, often, I remember, to a delightful old inn—like one of those painted by Morland—the Travellers' Rest, now, alas! pulled down and destroyed, whilst a horror has been built in its stead!

How well do I recollect our walks across the fields to meet the ‘Magnet Coach,’ on which my father used to travel when making his perpetual journeys to his beloved Newmarket!* We, of course, never went by it, for it was not considered at all the correct thing for ladies to go in the coaches.

In connection with old-world travelling, I well remember that on our tours abroad, whenever we came across one of the few railways, we still continued to use our carriage, which was hoisted up on to a sort of truck.

Occasionally we would be taken over to Weymouth, to spend what was supposed to be a happy day; but it generally ended in dirty frocks, mingled with tears and scoldings. George III., after his long illness, was for some time at this seaside place, and when he went away an eccentric old lady, Mrs. Young by name, purchased the house he had occupied. It had been prophesied to her that she would die in a palace, and, as this was probably the only one she could get hold of on reasonable terms, she seized the opportunity, and, having bought it, there ended her days; the house is now a hotel. One of our great pleasures was riding into Dorchester, our county town, where on certain days a military band used to play, and where beautiful officers, in still more beautiful uniforms, delighted our youthful

* He was well known at Newmarket as ‘the little Lord.’

eyes. A pretty town is Dorchester, with its avenues of trees. The house in which Judge Jeffreys presided at what were known as the 'Bloody Assize,' still stands in the main street, whilst a celebrity of happier memory is Barnes, the Dorset poet. Literature at the present day is yet well represented in this old - world town, for in it lives my friend Mr. Thomas Hardy, the great Wessex novelist and writer. Behind one of the old houses there was a grand and ancient mulberry-tree, planted at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, when so many French weavers came into England, and mulberry-trees were everywhere being cultivated with a view to the production of silk. Alas! as I write these lines I hear that this venerable tree is to be sacrificed, as the ground is needed for a soldiers' home. Such acts of vandalism as this ruin all our pleasant thoughts of old days; but we can help nothing in this world, and can only try to adapt ourselves to all these changes, which in some cases, no doubt, are improvements.

A very flourishing Dorsetshire village industry in my youth was button - making, now completely obsolete and forgotten. The villagers used to make the most lovely and artistic buttons, but the introduction of the horrible manufactured ones soon killed this pretty art.

Whenever we inquired of the village girls what their occupation was, almost invariably the quaint answer 'We do buttony' was given.

'Buttony' must, I think, be of Norman-French derivation. The companions in arms of the Conqueror were very partial to Dorsetshire, and many

of the peasantry of that county bear names which attest their Norman descent. This subject has been most artistically dealt with by Mr. Hardy in '*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*,' whose ancestor, Sir Pagan D'Urberville actually lies buried in Bere Regis Church—the King's Bere of the novelist.

Working from tradition, the villagers had certain patterns for button-making which must have been of great antiquity. The only names of the different sorts which I can speak of with certainty are 'cart-wheels'—two kinds, large and small—and 'high tops,' for waistcoats. There were, of course, many other sorts and sizes—buttons for smock-frocks and other articles of rustic dress; the 'high tops,' I remember, were principally used for hunting waistcoats, and were so excellently made that twenty-five years of use in no way impaired their efficiency.

I believe that there exist but two collections of these old buttons, in their way wonders of artistic taste—my own and that in the museum at Dorchester.

It seems to me that, had the educational authorities attempted to keep alive these local industries by encouraging the children under their charge not to abandon them, they would have been doing much more good than by teaching smatterings of many totally useless subjects, which, imperfectly understood and soon forgotten, have but served to convert the English rustic into a somewhat dissatisfied imitation of the Londoner, whilst thoroughly stamping out that local character and individuality which was such an admirable feature of old-time country life.

A year or two later—in the forties, as far as I can remember, we again made a migration to the Continent, this time to Italy.

Our cavalcade was much the same as before : fourgons, family coach, britzka, French cook, gold-laced and incompetent courier, maids, footman, and six saddle horses, with two grooms. One of us, however, was missing, my sister having just married Lord Pollington ; so there were only my father, mother, self, and governess.

We stayed for six weeks at Bruges, which I still remember as a most interesting old city. It did not at that time so thoroughly merit the appellation of ‘Bruges la morte’ as to-day, when, from what I have seen there in recent years, such life as it formerly had has departed. Now grass almost grows in its streets—at least, it did six years ago. Perhaps, however, since the Exposition has been held there things may have changed, but I hope that in any case its strange old-world charm has not been impaired.

Bruges, at the time of our visit, had quite a little society of its own, into which we were introduced by one of the local notabilities, who was quite a great man in his way. He said he would present us to the élite of the town, and began by taking us to an amateur concert got up by the most exclusive of the rank and fashion.

Alas ! he had promised more than he could perform, for on our arrival at the doors we were denied admission and were obliged to remain outside, tantalized by the sounds of the harmony within. Our would-be introducer into this inner

circle was nearly beside himself, and made desperate efforts to obtain our admission, all of which were vain. We all felt for the poor man, who, after the last gallant assault, said, ‘Mesdames, je sue de honte et de chagrin !’ Happily, just after this touching utterance, a gentleman emerged from the holy of holies, and begged us to enter, so all ended well. I fancy that our friend’s plea for a *comtesse anglaise et sa fille* had moved those exclusive hearts.

After a most pleasant and indeed instructive stay at Bruges, our great cavalcade once more started *en route* for Florence, at which place we duly arrived, settling down in a lovely old palace, the former residence of the Countess of Albany, who lived as the wife of the poet Alfieri, after the death of her first husband, Charles Edward, the young Pretender.

We only occupied half of the Casa San Clemente, the other portion being occupied by the owner, the Duc de St. Clemente, whose rooms, however, were reached by a separate staircase and entrance. The initials of the Pretender, ‘C. R.’ and his portrait in medallions were still visible almost everywhere ; even the wind-vanes outside the house bore his monogram. The walls of the living rooms, the sofas and chairs were covered with pale blue, yellow, and crimson satin, damask—faded, ragged, and strangely contrasting with other articles of furniture of the commonest kind, the whole telling a sad story of former grandeur and present decay.

There was a paradise of a garden, with pergolas, from which hung delicious bunches of grapes, whilst the tuberoses diffused their fragrance everywhere.

Glow-worms made the night lovely and all was like a fairy dream. We spent the winter at this old palace.

Whilst at Florence my mother and myself went to a grand royal marriage, Leopold, one of the sons of our old acquaintance Ludwig, King of Bavaria, being at this time married to a daughter of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. We saw the wedding party go to and return from the church ; but though thousands of people crowded to see the happy pair, not a cheer was heard in the noble Piazza del Duomo, which was a magnificent sight.

Prince Leopold, who remembered our visit to Munich, was told of our presence at Florence, and expressed great surprise that we had not been invited to the ceremony. He at once asked us to the Court ball, and took care I should have a dance with him there, too !

At that time society in Florence was somewhat mixed ; indeed, there were a great many people of shady character, in addition to others of none at all —so much so was this the case that the town had come to be designated ‘Le paradis des femmes galantes.’

We saw a great deal of Lord Holland, the English Ambassador, and his wife, the former a most charming man, with courtly manners of the old school. Here also I first met Mr. Leveson-Gower, who a few years ago gave us a charming volume of his memories of these far-away days. We were continually seeing Mr. Watts, who had come to Florence to study art ; good-looking and clever, everyone liked this young man, whose future as an artist even then never

seemed in doubt. Mr. Watts passed most of his time between the Palazzo St. Clemente (our house) and the British Embassy. He painted a picture of me during our stay at Florence (since several times exhibited), and certainly did not take more than three weeks to do it. His aim was to copy the colouring of the Venetian school, and the dress of Venetian design was suggested by him ; indeed, the whole idea of the painting was his, and I may add that he was delighted with the work when finished. In after-times he frequently came to see me, and always declared that this effort of his early years was as good as anything he had ever done. Mr. Watts did not take much part in social festivities, being of a grave disposition even as a young man.

Everyone was so pleased with my picture that our friend Lady Holland determined to follow my example and be painted by the young artist. Her picture, however, was done simply as a portrait, whilst mine was more of an idealized study, the dress, pose, everything in fact, being Mr. Watts's own idea.

The *grande dame* of Florence at that time was Princess Mathilde, daughter of the King of Würtemberg, and niece of the great Napoleon. She was married to Prince Demidoff, whose acquaintance we made in rather a curious way.

I had been allowed, as a great treat, to go to a domino ball, and whilst there a mysterious gentleman, whose identity was concealed by a domino, came up to me and said, ‘*Dieu ! comme vous êtes blanche—comme tes fleurs.*’ He then discovered himself and begged to be introduced to my mother,

and so our intimacy with this gallant Prince and his wife began.

The Villa Donato was magnificent and crowded with works of art. We used frequently to go and lunch there before going out in a party to ride. My mount was a lovely mare, which had come with us from England, named by me Testina, on account of her small head. She was seventeen hands high, and grey like her sire, Clearwell, my father's horse, the winner of the Two Thousand Guineas. Mounting was a great business, for being very short, I had to get up by means of a chair; I had ridden her all the way from Antwerp to Florence, and was thrown off once, on which occasion, owing, I suppose, to being very hard-headed, I was not hurt. Nevertheless, I became very fond of Testina after I had become accustomed to her height and her capers. When we left Italy, we sold our horses, and she became a racer—and not an unsuccessful one, either, for she won a race or two, I have heard. Alas! eventually she caused the death of a jockey, and her owner in consequence disposing of her, I fear the poor thing ended her days amidst very humble surroundings.

We passed a summer at Padua and Venice. Oh, how hot it was! I shall never forget it; I do not know that I enjoyed that stay very much. My father was with us, and being a man of extraordinarily small appetite, he could not understand others having a big one. His word was law for the family, and if by chance we secured a good meal in the middle of the day, he would say to the waiter when he came to inquire what we would like for

dinner, ‘Pour dire le vrai, nous avons dîné.’ This remark blighted our existence, but for the moment only, as my mother used to provide for us in a clandestine manner. My father during our travels would become very irascible at times, particularly when coming in contact with pompous foreign officials. He knew little Italian, but what he did know he used in earnest. For instance, whenever they attempted to stop us at any barrier, he would shout out ‘Il vostro Re è un scroccone’ (‘Your King is a swindler !’), which somewhat trenchant assertion, owing to the tones of thunder in which it was delivered, as a rule paralysed opposition and secured our unhampered progress.

We had a very kind friend at Venice, Mr. Rawdon Browne, a literary man, who was said to be the greatest living authority upon the history of the city. He possessed a most interesting collection of Venetian antiquities, including some illuminated books once belonging to the Doges. There were also many finely carved wooden frames representing flowers and leaves cut and wreathed in rich and graceful grouping. Other curious wood carvings were mystic birds from the library of the Church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo.

Amongst the MSS. were many autograph letters from the Venetian Ambassadors at foreign Courts, and also the journals of a Contarini, kept during his official residence at the Court of Henri Quatre.

Mr. Browne’s rooms were well arranged with old carved chairs, antique writing-tables, and ancient tapestry—everywhere was something to be admired and everything had a story. These charming rooms

were in the Palazzo Ferro, looking upon the Grand Canal and the glorious *ex voto* of grateful Venice—Santa Maria della Salute.

Mr. Browne was most kind to us during our stay, and consenting to act as our cicerone, we saw much which would otherwise have been closed to us. With him we went to pay a visit to two old maiden ladies of the great family of Foscari, the last of their race, who lived in the Palazzo Foscari, in a sad state of squalor. We found them in what had been the State bedchamber of the unhappy Doge who fell dead on hearing the bell of the Campanile ringing to celebrate the election of his successor. The room retained little of its ancient splendour, but the figures which formerly supported the bed canopy were in existence, and their fine carving, though terribly worm-eaten, still visible. There were a few broken miserable chairs, table, and a bare old settle, on which we were requested to sit as a seat of ceremony; the bed was of very poor appearance, but large and scrupulously clean. It was a most desolate apartment. One of the old ladies seemed gloomy and cold, whilst the other was very lively and gay, though complaining of being disabled by age. I told her that her happy disposition was a compensation. Poor thing, she had lost all her teeth, and was quite crooked and bowed down. Both of these old ladies wore dresses of the poorest make and quality, but they were always addressed as Contessas and had nothing common in their manners. They had had a little annuity of two zwanzigers a day (about three shillings, I think) arranged for them through a Jew

who cheated them out of half of it, which caused the poor old things to lament that, ‘whereas on one zwanziger they could hardly exist, on two they could have been perfectly happy.’ By a lucky chance, however, their last years were passed in comfort, for the story of their vicissitudes chancing to reach the ears of Lord Alvanley (the well-known wit) when he was staying at Venice, the sad tale touched him, and to the honour of this gay man of fashion be it recorded that, moved by pity for these forlorn old maids, he settled on them the sum which they had desired, and so enabled the last of the Foscari to end their days in complete contentment and peace.

Mr. Browne had first got to know the old ladies through the arrangements for this pension having been placed in his hands.

Another well-known Englishman living at Venice at that time was Mr. Cheney, who had also a large collection of antiquities, particularly of the elaborate bronze knockers peculiar to Venice. His collection, indeed, was a very labyrinth of carvings, paintings, gems, damask tapestry, old furniture, pictures and prints, which even now leaves a pleasing sense of confusion upon my memory.

The antiquities of Venice were not at that time preserved with the care exercised to-day, but a beginning had already been made, for which a considerable amount of credit is due to the Austrian Government, which was very liberal in granting supplies of money for restoring old buildings of antiquarian interest. No palaces were allowed to be pulled down; indeed, they were in great request,

and the Duchess de Berri, who bought the Vendramin for £4,000, was considered to have been extremely fortunate.

In the days (which now feel strangely remote) before the various districts of Italy were moulded into one kingdom, the English Legation to the Court of Sardinia was seated at Turin, under the sway of the able and genial Sir James Hudson, whose lively sense of humour often imparted to his friends sundry amusing little anecdotes of the eccentric manners and customs habitual to that essentially rough diamond—King Victor Emmanuel ‘il re galantuomo.’ One of these, more characteristic than edifying, related to the complimentary visit of a Cardinal from the Vatican, ushered without great ceremony into the presence of both King, Queen and their children, while the former was partaking of a homely luncheon very perceptibly flavoured by raw onions. At the close of this somewhat unconventional reception, the Cardinal, on taking leave, expressed, in fittingly flowery language, his pleasure in seeing and admiration of the royal progeny; whereupon, to the confusion of Queen and holy horror of Cardinal, this impulsively indecorous monarch blurted out: ‘Ah! if your Eminence could only see my *other* family!’

After leaving Venice we went to a good many Italian towns. At Naples we went to the San Carlo theatre, where we witnessed a ballet of no very amusing kind, in which the dancers, owing to a regulation made by the Queen, wore drawers, or rather trousers, of dark green silk, reaching to their knees. In due course we went on to Rome, into

which city we drove about sunset by the Porta San Giovanni, taking up our abode in apartments in the Palazzo Valdambrini. I remember going to see Mrs. Somerville, who had a great reputation as a learned woman at that day, and we were all very frightened at being presented to her. However, she soon set us at our ease, being very simple in manner and having a kind and quiet way of speaking. We also went to the studio of Macdonald, a great sculptor of those days, who made a model of my ear in marble, which I still possess.

We saw many other studios, and, of course, thoroughly explored the Eternal City. During a visit to the English cemetery, a beautiful spot adorned with aloes, cypresses, and cactus, we were shown a monument lately erected to the child of Lady Grant. The verse chosen for the tomb was 'Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,' and it was with much difficulty that permission had been obtained to inscribe it on the monument, the censor under Papal rule being a bigoted monk, who declared that he could not allow such an inscription, as it was a lie. No happiness, said he, but, on the contrary, perpetual torment must be the portion of a heretic. However, his scruples, for which from a certain point of view there is something to be said, were eventually overcome.

We spent about three months in Rome, and then started off again, driving with post-horses, and stopping, amongst other places, at Perugia, Parma, Verona, and Mantua, on our way to the Brenner Pass, which we crossed in a fall of snow, and arrived

at Innsbruck. Our resting-place there was the Golden Eagle, an inn famous by reason of its association with the gallant Andreas Hofer, 'hero and patriot of the Tyrol,' who, having for some time successfully made a stand against the troops of Napoleon, was finally captured in 1810 through the treachery of a trusted adherent, taken to Mantua, and shot. His body now, however, had been brought back to Innsbruck, in the Hof Kirche of which town he is buried, his monument crowned with a statue which our hostess, who had well known the patriot chief, declared to be a perfect resemblance. His son was still alive, having been ennobled by the Emperor and presented with a good office under Government. Unfortunately, said our informant, he was somewhat addicted to drinking, and by no means so estimable a character as the son of the heroic Hofer ought to be. From Innsbruck we made our way back to England, stopping at Nuremberg and Cologne *en route*.

Thus ended my second tour on the Continent, and though I had much enjoyed seeing the numberless beautiful buildings and works of art, I was not at all sorry to once more set my foot upon English soil, my thoughts running on the delights and pleasures of a London season, which, considering my age and lively disposition, was in no way a thing at which to wonder.

CHAPTER IV

Samuel Rogers and his breakfasts—His house and pictures—My visits to Agnes Berry—Two old ladies—Lady Blessington—Count d'Orsay—Prince Louis Napoleon—Mr. Elliott Warburton.

OUR family house in Berkeley Square — Horace Walpole's house, of which I have before spoken—had by this time ceased to belong to my father. I believe that it passed out of his hands owing to certain very unfortunate nights at Crockford's, at which shrine of the great goddess Chance he was ever a most assiduous worshipper. However, we continued to come up to town for about three months every year, a house being hired for the season, and a very pleasant time we used to have. One year we had a beautiful house just out of Berkeley Square, with Flaxman chimney-pieces and lovely Adam ceilings. It was only pulled down a short time ago, to make way for the erection of palatial flats.

The owner was an eccentric man, managing to spend his income without any benefit to himself or others, and his affairs were generally in a state of financial turmoil. A short time after we had taken the house we began to realize this, for my mother

accidentally met a strange man on the staircase, who appeared perfectly at home, explaining that he was the bailiff in charge; however, this undesirable inmate was soon sent about his business.

My dear mother was a great friend of the poet Samuel Rogers, and we often went to his breakfasts, which were at that time celebrated, for there were usually one or two great people present. His house at 22, St. James's Place was filled with pictures and curiosities; on a sideboard in the dining-room was a cast of the head of Pope by Roubiliac, whilst between the fireplace and window was the poet's writing-table; there was an ingenious mechanical contrivance by means of which the larger pictures in the house could be moved from their place so as to be viewed in different lights. The library and drawing-room were on the first floor, the book-cases being surmounted by Greek vases, whilst 'Cupid and Psyche,' by Sir Joshua Reynolds, hung over one of the two mantelpieces — the other, beautifully carved by Flaxman, was crowned, I think, by a study by Rubens; altogether, there were six or seven Reynoldses in the house, which was a real haven of artistic rest and repose. I remember another well-known poet at one of these breakfasts, Tommy Moore, and his talking to my sister and myself. 'And these,' he said, turning to Rogers, 'are the daughters of my friend the beautiful Miss Fawkener' — a compliment to my mother, who was an old friend of his. He went on to say all sorts of nice things to us, being possessed of the Irish charm of manner in a singular degree. At

another of these breakfasts I heard him sing ‘When first I saw thee’ in a most expressive and feeling manner. Mrs. Leicester Stanhope, afterwards Lady Harrington, used often to be one of the guests.

I have a vivid recollection of Samuel Rogers himself, sitting crumpled up, as it were, in his chair, a little wizened figure, dressed in a blue coat and nankeen waistcoat. Very particular in his costume, he had been somewhat wickedly nicknamed ‘The Dug-up Dandy.’ He was very fond of me, I think, and on my marriage gave me a charmingly bound volume of his poem ‘Italy,’ writing inside it: ‘The Lady Dorothy Fanny Walpole, from her sincere friend Samuel Rogers.’

As children, my sister and myself were once or twice taken to see Miss Agnes Berry, whom Horace Walpole had wished to marry, and to whom he actually proposed. She was then very old, but still took a great interest in our family, and had begged that we should be brought to see her; as far as I remember, she lived in Curzon Street. At that time she was to me but an old lady in a quaint sort of mob-cap, and I was more awed than edified by our visits; but it is a pleasure now to think that I actually saw one so closely associated with my kinsman of the eighteenth century.

I also knew very well two old ladies who also belonged to another age: these were two Miss Walpoles, my cousins, daughters of Colonel Lambert Walpole, killed at the fatal pass of Tubberneering during the Irish Rebellion of 1798, where, I believe, he made a terrible strategic mistake, which resulted

in his defeat and death. The old ladies had apartments at Hampton Court, and also a house in Grafton Street, where they gave very pleasant little parties. On one occasion, when both of the two were well over ninety, Miss Fanny, the younger, who had that day been rather unwell, only joined her sister in the sitting-room in the evening just before dinner. On her arrival downstairs, the latter (Miss Charlotte by name) remarked : ‘Fanny, I am going to be ill, too: I feel so hot about the head; it must be apoplexy.’ ‘Nothing of the sort,’ exclaimed Miss Fanny, making a dash at her sister’s head; ‘your cap’s on fire, and I’m going to put it out;’ and so the brave old thing did. The two sisters both lived to be well over ninety-five, and having passed the whole of their peaceful lives together, now rest side by side at Kensal Green. Their mother was a daughter of the great Lord Clive.

We saw a good many literary people, for my mother liked them, having, I think, inherited certain intellectual tastes from her grandfather, Sir Everard Fawkener, the friend of Voltaire, who had dedicated ‘*Zaïre*’ to him. About this time I remember constantly seeing Lady Blessington driving about London in a barouche. She used to wear a sort of turban-like head-dress, with her face more or less enveloped in a scarf: to me it gave rather the impression of one suffering from toothache. She was then, as far as I recollect, far from retaining many traces of that beauty which she had formerly possessed. I also recollect Count D’Orsay, whom I used to meet later on than this at ‘Dizzy’s.’ He was indeed a splendid figure, every part of his

equipment carefully thought out. Clever handsome, possessed, indeed, of every social charm, in him culminated and ended the race of beaux, which to-day is totally extinct.

Well do I remember meeting a man who, at that time looked upon rather in the light of an adventurer, was to become French Emperor, and for a space perhaps the most powerful Sovereign in Europe. Prince Louis Napoleon was not altogether to the taste of young ladies' mothers at that day, for they were rather afraid of him ; nevertheless, to us he seemed very agreeable whenever we met. There was nothing of his uncle, the great Napoleon, in his appearance, which could not be called handsome or imposing, whilst at that time his chances of becoming ruler of France were considered absolutely nil. Bearing the reputation of not being overburdened with funds, and somewhat fond of frequenting shady society, his manner of living did not commend itself to people of stern views, so his pretensions to governing France were, as I have said, generally not taken very seriously. He could when he chose be exceedingly amusing, and would frequently make my sister and myself laugh very much. At such times no one from his way of talking would ever have believed that he would rise to the great position which he afterwards succeeded in making for himself. We met him often in company with Mr. Elliott Warburton, the author of 'The Crescent and the Cross,' doomed later on to be one of the victims at the burning of the steamship *Amazon*. Prince Napoleon, though not perhaps exceptionally brilliant, was amusing and agreeable enough, and

my sister and I saw a good deal of him, enjoying his society—so much so, indeed, that we were often told to see less of him ; for, as I have said, at that time society did not view this Prince with any too favourable an eye, nor consider him an ideal companion for young ladies.

CHAPTER V

My début in society—Old Lord Hertford—Vauxhall—Cremorne as a resort of society—Lord and Lady Jersey and their daughters — A wonderful sale — Bulwer Lytton — An amusing correspondence—My brother and his ways—Edward VII. as Prince of Wales—His chivalrous defence of Father Damien—His kindness to me.

WHEN I first came out I went to a great many gaieties. That season I think I went to fifty balls, sixty parties, about thirty dinners, and twenty-five breakfasts. In those days there were many of the last-mentioned given by people living in houses then on the outskirts of London, but now the progress of building has quite demolished these *al fresco* entertainments. As a child I went to a breakfast at the old Lord Hertford's, Thackeray's Lord Steyne, in the Regent's Park, about which I only remember that, being greatly bored (as children often are at social functions), the sole incident that cheered me was a cow being milked into a superb pail, the milk providing a sillabub for the guests.

I also recollect a breakfast at Syon House, in honour of Ibrahim Pasha, a gorgeous creature who made salaams to the different guests.

Magnificent fêtes used to be given at Gunnersbury,

which lasted all the afternoon and part of the night as well. Vauxhall at that time was a great fashion, and the smart world often went there and had their fortunes told by a picturesque old gipsy in a grotto. Another gay resort to which young people then went was Cremorne. I well remember a gay company of smart ladies and their partners making up a quadrille on the platform, to the amusement, maybe the amazement, of the more humble frequenters of that pleasure garden. Later on, these pleasure gardens quite changed their character—not for the better—and were ultimately put an end to.

My sister and myself were very great friends with the three Ladies Villiers, and we used to spend a great deal of time at Lady Jersey's. She was about the best known of the great ladies of the period, and Lord Jersey one of the handsomest men I ever saw. He was always so kind to us, and they used to give the most delightful evening parties—not as they are now: it was before the rank and file were admitted!

In those days Parliament was not so exacting as is at present the case, and consequently members of both Houses were at liberty to join in social communion with their friends, which made society very enjoyable.

The three Villiers girls were lovely. The eldest, Lady Sarah, who afterwards married Prince Esterhazy, had the most beautiful expression; the second one, Lady Clementine, was also very pretty; whilst the youngest, Lady Adela, was extremely high-bred looking. We used constantly to meet them at a very fashionable dancing-school held at Almack's by

a Madame Michau, a most extraordinarily plain, humpy little woman, from whom one would have expected nothing, and yet in showing off her figures she was the very perfection of grace, and elicited boundless and well-deserved admiration from her pupils. We always looked forward to these dancing lessons, as we met there so many of our girl friends, and in after-days, when enjoying the real splendours of Almack's—which was then most exclusive—we often thought of our early lessons, the remembrance of which almost eclipsed the pleasures of taking part in a real ball.

Lady Adela Villiers eventually made a romantic runaway marriage, eloping with a gallant officer of Hussars. No one heard anything about it till it happened. One evening my sister and I were reading quietly in our room at home when we were startled by the sudden appearance of the *dame de compagnie* of the Ladies Villiers. Rushing in, she exclaimed, ‘Est-ce-que Lady Adèle est ici?’ and on being told that nothing had been seen of her charge, ejaculated, ‘Alors toute est finie!’ and ran out. Only in the morning did we hear what had happened.

Lady Sarah, as I have said, married Prince Nicholas Esterhazy, a son of the Esterhazy who was a great diplomatist. This was in 1842, but, though it is sixty-three years ago, I perfectly remember her magnificent trousseau, the piles of lovely things, and, above all, the ornamental lace and flower tops to the long gloves, of which there were dozens and dozens, as it were a provision for a lifetime. In those days people laid in an enormous stock when they married, and stored up things which

now would be discarded or given away. Some people, indeed, kept everything, steadily accumulating dresses, lingerie, bonnets even, all their lives. Such a one was the old Duchess of Somerset, at whose death there was a wonderful sale, to which I went. It made a great impression upon my mind, and I still vividly recall almost every detail. The catalogue alone was a work of art, fully emblazoned with the ducal arms ; sumptuously got up, it contained pages upon pages, giving full descriptions of the things which were to be sold. There was one large room full of silk stockings in bundles of a dozen tied up with pink ribbon, never undone since they had been purchased ; another room was filled with silk and other petticoats, whilst of dresses there were literally dozens—one of them of tartan silk which had been worn by Her Grace at a Scotch ball, and had there created a great sensation. There was also her splendid Court train ; but perhaps most curious of all was the immense collection of bonnets of all ages, some of them poke, others with immense plumes of feathers starting from the crown, and yet others of turban-like appearance—in fact, a more representative collection of bonnets could not possibly have been found. For many years before her death this Duchess had never done away with anything whatever belonging to her wardrobe, and this conservative spirit had even extended to such things as tooth-brushes and other toilet accessories of a like kind. There were about thirty boxes of false hair alone.

An immense quantity of the Duke's apparel was sold at the same time, including the robes which he

wore as a Knight of the Garter, and some Court suits of the time of the Regency, which I remember on account of their beautiful appearance and the steel buttons of exquisite workmanship which adorned them.

There never was such a sale, then or now. I don't know what sum was realized, but I myself bought one of the Court suits, mostly on account of the pretty steel buttons, for £3. What a sum it would have fetched now! A wondrous sale indeed, but it took place in such an obscure part of London that few knew of it.

Whilst on the subject of dress of a bygone day, I may mention that my brother always maintained that it was the first Lord Lytton who brought about the fashion of universal and unchanging black for gentlemen's evening dress. If my memory does not play me false, Pelham was always dressed in clothes of that colour.

I knew Bulwer Lytton myself, and a great dandy he used to be in the 'curly days' when dandies flourished.

He was a brilliant conversationalist, not at all pompous or pedantic. A dear friend of his was Lady Sherborne, still happily alive, who was the only lady I remember as having been present at Knebworth when I used to stay there.

Possessed of enormous confidence in his own mental powers—a confidence which was fully justified—the first Lord Lytton, as is well known, married a young lady whose only dowry was her good looks. An intimate friend frankly told the novelist that this marriage was an imprudent act—at that time

Bulwer Lytton's income did not amount to any very considerable sum.

'My dear fellow,' was the prompt reply, 'you have no need to be alarmed; so convinced am I of my own ability to make all the money I want by my writings, that, though I quite see the objections you urge, I am marrying without the slightest fear or hesitation.'

I always feel sorry that he never gave me his novels; in those days authors were not nearly so generous as they are to-day, when books are showered in all directions—more given than read.

The following letters once passed between Bulwer Lytton and my brother; they are not unamusing:

'MY DEAR WALPOLE,

'Here I am at Bath—bored to death. I am thinking of writing a play about your great ancestor, Sir Robert. Had he not a sister Lucy, and did she not marry a Jacobite?'

My brother promptly replied:

'MY DEAR LYTTON,

'I care little for my family, and less still for Sir Robert, but I know that he never had a sister Lucy, so she could not have married a Jacobite.'

However, this mattered little to Lord Lytton, for his answer ran;

'MY DEAR WALPOLE,

'You are too late! Sir Robert *had* a sister Lucy, and she *did* marry a Jacobite.'

So, in defiance of history, the play ‘Walpole’ came to be written.

My brother was a man who, possessing exceptional mental gifts, having, indeed, a touch of genius, as Mr. Disraeli once wrote, yet never accomplished, or indeed attempted, anything at all. A fine classical scholar and bibliophile of charming manner and brilliant intellect, here, if ever, was a case of what might have been.

I have in my life known two men who could have risen to great eminence, and occupied the highest posts, had they cared to enter public life or otherwise utilize their abilities: one was my brother, the other the second Duke of Wellington.

Of the latter I hope to say something later on; for the present let it suffice that, clever, witty, and of great mental capacity, he deliberately chose to be a spectator, when he might have played a principal part.

For politics my brother cared nothing at all. He had become a Catholic, and professed himself an out-and-out Jacobite, constantly lamenting the sad fate of the Stuarts, whilst eagerly collecting relics of Prince Charlie—a somewhat curious cult for one of his lineage, Sir Robert Walpole having been the principal upholder of the Protestant succession.

Possessing great social charm, he could with difficulty be induced to go into society; indeed, in his later years he became practically a recluse in his house in Cavendish Square, invariably refusing to see people when they called, and lamenting the world’s neglect of an old man when they did not.

At times he would stay at his country place in

Norfolk, where he had converted an old abandoned house into a really charming retreat. In the grounds was a ruined chapel, and here, some forty years before his death, he caused a tomb to be erected, in readiness, as he said, for one about to die.

On one occasion, whilst walking in his garden, he was horrified to find himself confronted by a man named Wright, employed upon the estate, who, brandishing a pistol, declared that he would have his rights. The man was, however, soon disarmed, and was then asked the reason of such threatening behaviour.

'My Lord,' said he, 'your grandfather lay a-dying, and your father, the late Earl, and I were at his bedside. Of a sudden the old Earl seemed to want to speak, and he did give a sort of murmur like. Your father says, says 'e, "Tell me, for God's sake, Wright, what does my dear father wish to say?"' "My Lord," says I, "he wish to say, 'Give Wright £50 a year, and give his wife the same'—that is what he wish to say, my Lord, that is what he wish to say.'"

I used to go to Cavendish Square almost every day when my brother was there—for his dislike of seeing people did not extend to his own family, and of me he was very fond. He would often speak with an intense pathos (which at times almost carried conviction) of the terrible social isolation to which his advanced age condemned him; but when there came a ring at the door-bell he would immediately give the most stringent orders to say that he was far too ill to see anyone, though as a rule in perfect health. The barrier which he chose to erect between himself

and the outer world was chiefly maintained through the instrumentality of an old Italian valet, Carlo by name, who in his way was quite a character. On one occasion a distant cousin, having practically carried the hall-door by assault, declared that, even were she not permitted to see Lord Orford, she would at least write a note to him, and proceeded to do so in the passage. My brother meanwhile was leaning over the balustrade of the staircase above and shaking his fist at his defeated henchman, who, lapsing into his native Italian (which the lady perfectly understood), uttered the warning cry, 'Take care, Milor ! the old hag is still here and writing.'

Another time, the present King, then Prince of Wales, coming to pay my brother a kindly visit, and being confronted by Carlo, inquired whether the latter knew to whom he was speaking. 'Certainly,' was the reply : 'Sir Henry Drummond Wolff.' I may add that there exists not the slightest resemblance between that diplomatist and His Gracious Majesty, who was much amused by such a mistake.

The Prince of Wales was very fond of my brother, and used frequently to deplore to me the state of seclusion in which the latter lived at Cavendish Square, which, as he aptly put it, was a sort of retreat entirely cut off from civilization.

A thorough man of the world, he quite understood my brother's somewhat eccentric mode of life, taking a humorous and lenient view of it on account of the original and clever personality of one for whom, I think I may say, he had a sincere regard.

The Prince's visits were always highly appreciated by my brother, who clearly recognised those great powers of mind and enormous tactfulness which have since caused Edward VII. to be acclaimed as the Arbitrator of International Peace and wisest of European monarchs. In matters of everyday life his judgment is always rigidly just, whilst a contempt for the venomous gossip of the modern world is one of His Majesty's most kingly characteristics.

I remember the chivalrous way in which the Prince of Wales criticised certain rumours derogatory to the memory of Father Damien at the time of that hero's death. 'In these days,' he wrote to me, 'not only the characters of those who are living are assailed, but even the dead. I know nothing of any scandals about Father Damien, but of one thing I am convinced: he will always go down to posterity as a great man, and as he is no more, I think his character might be left in peace.'

To me the Prince was always kindness itself, and amongst my most valued treasures are several little gifts, some of which he gave me under rather humorous circumstances. On one occasion, being seated next to him at dinner, I did what I have always done, despite all social convention—that is, ate oysters with a knife. This not unnaturally surprised the Prince, who made some humorous comment, upon which I explained that I was aware that such behaviour was almost a crime, but from long habit I must be regarded as an irreclaimable criminal. To my surprise and delight, the next morning he presented me with a beautiful case of

oyster knives, as he said, ‘In remembrance of your criminal tendency.’

Sandringham, as I remember it, was the most delightful of country houses, everybody being able to do exactly as they liked, and made thoroughly at home, whilst a refined simplicity, totally devoid of ostentation, bore witness to that peculiar sense of fitness so essentially the characteristic of the royal host and hostess. Of the gracious and charming Princess I will only say that she was ever the absolutely ideal châtelaine.

It was at Sandringham that I first met General Gallifet, the fearless soldier who led the historic charge at Sedan, when all but France’s honour had been lost. So impressed were the Germans by the desperate courage of the French horsemen that one of their regiments chivalrously forbore from annihilating the squadrons as they dashed past to destruction—a noble tribute to the defeated brave.

Since those days the King once did me the honour of inviting me to Windsor, amidst all the splendours of which I found the same kindly hospitality as of old. I was much interested whilst there to be shown all the splendid works of art which now, thanks to the enlightened taste of Edward VII., have been arranged in such a manner as to insure a full appreciation of their artistic worth.

My brother, though living in great retirement, retained his vivacity of intellect to the last, and, having a good memory, had much to say about his early days, which, by the way, were passed in anything but seclusion. He had been with Gladstone at Eton, where, staid, earnest, and studious, the

future statesman was ever ready to denounce what he deemed to be time-honoured abuses in the customs of the school, whilst never allowing a coarse phrase to pass without an energetic protest. Nevertheless, he was not disliked by his school-fellows, who regarded him as a boy quite out of the common, for whom a great future was in store.

The seventh Lord Hertford was one of my brother's great friends, and I have often heard him tell how that connoisseur of art used to say, 'One's family is everything. Remember that, Orford ! No man who belongs to a great family has the right, whatever his feelings may be, to despoil it by leaving property to strangers.'

The Lord Hertford in question can hardly be said to have acted up to these professions ; witness his testamentary dispositions and his splendid art collection bequeathed to Sir Richard Wallace, one of the handsomest men I ever saw in my life. I knew Lord Hertford, having met him first in Paris. Though his name remains to posterity, linked with the Wallace collections, there can scarcely now be many survivors that were ever on terms of personal intercourse with him ; but to his acquaintances and contemporaries the recollection of his incisively brilliant and epigrammatic conversation was vivid and lasting. Few indeed would have dared attempting to break a lance with him on his own ground, and to one over-bold spirit who unwisely sought to challenge such encounter the issue was disastrous. This rash adventuress, who became by marriage a Countess Zichy, was the eldest born of the Lady Strahan, pilloried more or less throughout Europe,

wherever she flaunted her notorious connection with the father of this Lord Hertford (Thackeray's Lord Steyne), together with the unholy spoils therefrom derived, which eventually largely accrued to her daughters. At a great public entertainment Countess Zichy, bedizened, as was her wont, with the priceless jewels thus acquired, came upon Lord Hertford, and conceived the happy idea of starting what was then colloquially termed a quizzing attack upon him for the plain style of his attire, more especially signalizing his studs. This public exhibition of good taste and propriety was met by a low bow and the crushing retort: 'Yes, ma'am. The difference between us is that *I* wear mother-of-pearl and *you* wear my grandmother's pearls.'

CHAPTER VI

My marriage—Honeymoon in Nelson's home—Eridge and its treasures—Lord Abergavenny—Founds the Constitutional Club—His devotion to the Conservative cause—Intimacy with Lord Beaconsfield—Some letters—Our life in Hampshire—I am nearly burnt to death—A fraudulent botanist and an instance of exceptional honesty—A theatrical maid.

IN the year 1847 I was married to my cousin, Mr. Reginald Nevill. Our marriage took place at Wickmere Church, near Wolterton, a quaint old edifice which, I am glad to say, stands to-day in much the same condition, having fortunately escaped restoration. My cousin, the Rev. Thomas Walpole performed the ceremony, so we were all Walpoles together. We were married in the old English style—the tenantry drawn up at the gate, and all the neighbourhood jolly and gay with that robust happiness once the characteristic of English country life. My father, I remember, was somewhat affected at parting with me, for in those days marriage was looked upon in a different way from now. As to myself, I went through the ceremony in, I hope, a composed fashion, though I can lay no claim to having exhibited the dashing sang-froid of my sister, who at her wedding announced that she was not at all nervous or upset, as she saw

nothing to be ashamed of in being married. After it was over we returned to Wolterton for luncheon, at which speeches were made and toasts drunk, and at six o'clock in the evening started for Burnham Thorpe, to spend our honeymoon in the house once inhabited by the great and immortal Nelson, who was related to my ancestor, Lord Walpole of Wolterton, after whom he was named Horatio. At the time of the great Admiral's birth the Rectory was under repair, and Mrs. Nelson was therefore staying at an adjoining house; this was the one to which we went. The living of Burnham Thorpe was presented to Nelson's father by Lord Walpole, and the village was and still is part of our family property.

The tenantry received us in the most cordial and yet respectful manner, bringing me all sorts of presents, amongst which were bowls of beautiful rich cream, the remembrance of which is still implanted upon my memory. The cream looked delicious, but it was so infected with the taste and smell of turnips that it quite overpowered one; so strong was it that we had to eject the bowls from the house, but of course in a covert manner, lest the feelings of the donors should be hurt.

Here in this spot of historic memories we passed ten days, and then returned once more to Wolterton, being escorted into the park by mounted tenantry, who rode by the side of our carriage.

Mr. Nevill had been brought up at Eridge, where he used to be called the 'Castle Baby,' it appearing certain for some time that he would be the heir. Born eight years before Waterloo, a number of trees

were planted at Eridge to celebrate the event, where to-day a thick wood spreads its branches over the inscribed rock which tells that this is ‘Reginald’s Toll,’ planted in 1807 to celebrate the birth of Reginald Henry Nevill.

Mr. Nevill was a gentleman of the old school, though he had somewhat Liberal ideas. As a young man he had been very fond of driving the coaches, at that time not yet supplanted by the iron horse. My dear cousin Lord Abergavenny has told me how, as a boy going to school at Brighton by coach, he observed a gentleman at Lewes taking the reins in place of the usual coachman, and inquired who he might be. ‘Mr. Nevill,’ was the reply ; upon which he realized that he was being driven by the very man who had lost the Eridge property and an earldom by his (the schoolboy’s) appearance in the world. As a matter of fact, Lord Abergavenny and my husband became close and intimate friends, and we were constantly going to stay with him. Eridge is a beautiful place with a most lovely deer-park, the only one I believe which survives in its original condition from the Conqueror’s times, when it was mentioned in the Doomsday Book as Redesfelle. One of the last seats left to the Nevills, Queen Elizabeth was entertained within its walls during her progress through Sussex, at which time it appears to have been a considerable mansion. Nevertheless, not very long after this it became practically abandoned as a residence, and in the course of time degenerated into little more than a farmhouse. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, however, the Lord Abergavenny of the

day determined to leave the comparatively new family place of Kidbroke, and once more reside at the home of his forefathers. Accordingly, he restored Eridge in the Strawberry Hill style of castellated architecture, which, owing to the splendid position of the house on an eminence looking over the glorious park, is in this instance not at all ineffective.

Ever since feudal days, until the present Lord Abergavenny interested himself in politics, the Nevill family has taken but very little part in public life. Indeed, so much so is this the case that a Radical writer once rather amusingly said : ‘We find no trace of any Nevill attaining distinction for several hundred years, with the exception of the gentleman of that name whose carts containing one of the chief supports of life (bread) are conspicuous objects in the streets of London.’

Eridge Castle contains a good many interesting things, including a very curious model of the *Foudroyant*, the man-of-war which brought Nelson’s body back to England. It was on this ship that Ralph, Viscount Nevill fought at Trafalgar. Some time ago a party of tourists who were being shown over the house, having come to a halt before the model of this old three-decker, which stands in a recess off the entrance-hall, became much interested in it, and proceeded to make inquiries as to the name and history of the miniature vessel. The old servant who was showing them round, it is said, was fully equal to the occasion, and without the slightest hesitation said : ‘The little ship is a model of the one which brought the Nevills over from Normandy in William the Conqueror’s day !’

There are several good pictures in the house, amongst them a beautiful full-length portrait by Gainsborough of the Hon. Henry Nevill as a boy. Here also are preserved the robes of that Baron Abergavenny who was one of the judges at the trial of Mary Queen of Scots at Fotheringay, as well as other relics of far-away times, such as curious old brass-studded chests, old arms, queer fowling-pieces, and the like, as well as a richly embroidered coat, which, belonging to Joseph Bonaparte, was captured at the Battle of Vittoria by John, Viscount Nevill, who was wounded by the last shot fired during that fierce encounter.

In the dining-hall is a full-length portrait of my husband's father, the Hon. George Nevill, standing by his horse, which the family stoutly maintain to be the work of Romney. If such should be the case, the presence of the horse is very unusual, for I have never heard of Romney as a painter of animals. There is also another picture of my father-in-law as a boy of thirteen, painted by F. Sartorius in 1773, whilst conspicuous in the entrance-hall hangs a portrait of John Robinson, the father of 'pretty Mary Robinson,' who married the Hon. Henry Nevill, afterwards second Earl of Abergavenny.

John Robinson was appointed Surveyor-General of Woods and Forests by Pitt in 1778, and during his tenure of the office in question planted twenty thousand oak-trees, as well as millions of acorns, at Windsor—arboricultural performances of which he was very proud, as his picture indicates, for in it is prominently displayed, 'A report of acorns planted in and about Windsor Great Forest.'

As a politician John Robinson was a great favourite with George III. His political career was a long one, for he was Member for Harwich during twenty-six years, being on one occasion bitterly attacked by Sheridan, who, denouncing bribery and its instigators, replied to cries of 'Name, name!' by pointing to Robinson on the Treasury Bench, exclaiming at the same time, 'Yes, I could name him as soon as I could say Jack Robinson!' and thus originated the saying still current at the present day.

Scattered about Eridge in the shape of addresses, political cartoons, and the like, are many evidences of the present Lord Abergavenny's devotion to politics. The staunchest of Tories, he was a warm friend of Lord Beaconsfield, and, of course, an equally ardent opponent of Mr. Gladstone. So conscious was the latter statesman of this that, when staying in the vicinity at Lord Stratford de Redcliffe's, he declined to go and see Eridge, saying: 'I must not enter the lions' den.'

Lord Abergavenny's devotion to the Conservative cause earned for him the name of the 'Tory blood-hound,' an appellation which his pertinacity and untiring efforts to assist the dissemination of Tory principles rendered very appropriate. He was the founder of the Constitutional Club and the first chairman of the Junior Carlton.

The first beginnings of the Constitutional Club were on a very modest scale, two old ladies in Tachbrook Street, Pimlico, being employed by Colonel Van Straubenzee, the first honorary secretary, to direct and post the initiatory circulars.

For some time the establishment of such a new centre of Conservatism seemed somewhat doubtful, but Lord Abergavenny was not to be daunted. He consulted a most able organizer, Mr. Martin, the secretary of the Junior Carlton Club, and determined, on the latter's advice, to obtain the aid of the committee of that very successful institution in furthering the scheme, and in a short time, with the consent of that body, a room in the club was set specially apart for the business arrangements connected with the founding of the Constitutional. Matters were now soon placed upon a sound basis, and it was not very long before the clubhouse was opened, when a large number of members poured in. From that day to this the great centre of Conservative activity in Northumberland Avenue, which owes its existence to so much persistence and energy, has never once looked back.

An almost fanatical Tory, Lord Abergavenny at one time practically devoted his life to the Conservative cause, ever devising new schemes whereby to strengthen and invigorate the party—a zeal which was always fully recognised by Lord Beaconsfield, who attached much importance to my cousin's influence and efforts, as a correspondence preserved at Eridge clearly shows.

In a letter to Mr. Spofforth, as far back as 1865, the great leader wrote: ‘Whatever the result, no one is more conscious and convinced than I am that the contest on the part of the Conservatives has been conducted with admirable ability.’ After paying a tribute to Mr. Spofforth’s zeal, energy, resource, and ready information, he continues: ‘I am

sure what I have seen of Lord Nevill throughout these affairs has made me often wish that I had such a man by my right hand in public life. I have never known an instance of such fiery energy and perfect self-control united with all those personal qualities which make exertion with such an inspiring comrade a labour of love.'

A few years later, on relinquishing office, Lord Beaconsfield wrote :

' My DEAR NEVILL,

' Now that I have nothing to do, I may remember my friends and my dearest, among whom you always will count.

' If I only could have given you a blue riband, I would have retired from office without a murmur ! We should then have cut out that old fellow and his mysterious green decoration.'

The latter paragraph refers to George, Lord Abergavenny, made a Knight of the Thistle by George III. Lord Beaconsfield had been much puzzled whilst at Eridge by the frequent occurrence of the St. Andrew's Cross and the motto *Nemo me impune lacescit* amongst the decorations of the ceilings and panelling, well knowing that the Nevills had had nothing to do with Scotland. He was quite ignorant of the precedent which formerly decreed that there should always be two English peers holding the Order of the Thistle, and was much interested to learn of such a usage having existed.

Mr. Nevill and I were a good deal at Eridge

in old Lord Abergavenny's time. His wife, I remember, had a great dislike to proposals for giving the suffrage to women, which, even forty years ago, were being discussed. She gave me a copy of some verses on this subject which had greatly taken her fancy. I do not know by whom they were written, or in what form they originally appeared, but they are so pretty, besides containing a great deal of solid sense, that I cannot resist quoting them here.

RIGHTS OF WOMEN.

THE RIGHTS of Woman, what are they ?
The RIGHT to labour, love and pray ;
The RIGHT to weep with those that weep,
The RIGHT to wake when others sleep.

The RIGHT to dry the falling tear,
The RIGHT to quell the rising fear ;
The RIGHT to smooth the brow of care,
And whisper comfort in despair.

The RIGHT to watch the parting breath,
To soothe and cheer the bed of death ;
The RIGHT, when earthly hopes all fail,
To point to that within the Veil.

The RIGHT the wanderer to reclaim,
And win the lost from paths of shame ;
The RIGHT to comfort and to bless
The widow and the fatherless !

The RIGHT the little ones to guide,
In simple faith, to Him who died ;
With earnest love and gentle praise
To bless and cheer their youthful days.

The RIGHT the intellect to train,
And guide the soul to noble aim ;
Teach it to rise above earth's toys,
And wing its flight to heavenly joys.

The RIGHT to live for those we love,
The RIGHT to die, that love to prove ;
The RIGHT to brighten earthly *homes*
With pleasant smiles and gentle tones.

Are these thy RIGHTS ? Then use them well ;
The holy influence none can tell.
If these are thine, why ask for more ?
Thou hast *enough* to answer for !

Are these thy RIGHTS ? Then murmur not
That woman's mission is thy lot ;
Improve the talents God has given ;
Life's duties done—thy rest in heaven !

Mr. Nevill had been very luckily made the heir of his uncle, Edward Walpole, a man of some note in his day, and known as 'Adonis' Walpole, by reason of his good looks. A great patron of the arts and a friend of Garrick, he was very fond of frequenting literary and artistic circles. Something also of a collector, he possessed an excellent library, which he appears to have regarded as a sort of bank, for at his death a portion of his considerable fortune—no less than £25,000—could not be accounted for, until by chance it was discovered in bank-notes carefully concealed amidst the leaves of various books.

My husband, besides being fond of coaching, also owned some racehorses, and was for a time associated with my father on the turf. He did not, however, share the latter's fondness for betting, and never

injured his fortune by it. I think that perhaps his love of sport was more than eclipsed by his fondness for *objets d'art*. A collector in a small way, he especially admired the French art of the eighteenth century, at that time under a heavy cloud which has now entirely lifted ; so time has vindicated the excellence of his judgment and taste. Caring but little for society, and in his latter years, when something of an invalid, never mingling in it at all, he nevertheless did not object to my entertaining or going about, for, being a sensible man, he recognised that people are not alike, and have different tastes. He also liked farming, and, owning a good deal of land, managed it with considerable success, whilst taking a great interest in all the people on the estate, with whom he was universally popular. At his death he was borne to his last resting-place in the little village churchyard by six of the oldest labourers on the estate, dressed in smock-frocks—a last tribute of respect to an English gentleman.

Our house in London was in Upper Grosvenor Street, nearly opposite the one then occupied by Mr. Disraeli, who was, as I have said already, a great friend of ours, and consequently it came about that we saw a good deal of him.

A few years after our marriage we bought the Dangstein estate on the borders of Hampshire. The house had been built by Mr. Knowles, the architect for Captain Lyons, who had made an attempt to construct a sort of huge Grecian temple. It was a comfortable house, and would have been more so had not a great portion of the interior been sacrificed to afford room for a great central

staircase, which occupied an enormous amount of space. The country was charming — cornfields, meadow-lands and woods bounded by the soft rolling undulations of the South Downs, hills which convey to the mind a sense of security and peace, whilst we had many very pleasant neighbours, including Mr. Cobden (of whom I will speak later), Lord Leconfield, Sir John Hawkshaw, and others.

That was the day of that monstrosity ‘the crinoline,’ which once came near costing me my life; in fact, I only escaped a terrible fate through mercifully retaining my presence of mind. It was in the drawing-room one evening after dinner at Dangstein before the gentlemen had joined us, and at the time my dress caught fire I was showing a lady an engraving of Mr. Cobden which he had just given me, and which hung near the fireplace. Somehow or other my voluminous skirt caught fire, and in an instant I was in a blaze, but I kept my presence of mind, and, rolling myself in the hearthrug, by some means or other eventually beat out and subdued the flames. I was rather badly burnt about one of my arms, where the marks remain to this day, but otherwise I was unhurt, and, oddly enough, not at all frightened; in fact, after having common whitening, made into a paste with water, applied to my arm—an excellent receipt for burns of which I had but a day or two before been reading—I came downstairs again in time to meet the gentlemen coming from their coffee. My not having been frightened is rather puzzling, but I have an idea that the thought of trying this new

receipt took up my attention. None of the ladies present could of course do much to assist me, for their enormous crinolines rendered them almost completely impotent to deal with fire, and had they come very close to me, all of them would have been in a blaze too.

English country life at that time still retained many of its old characteristics. Rustic mummers at the proper season used to come and enact the quaint play of 'St. George and the Dragon' in the grounds of the local gentry, where they were always sure of some pecuniary remuneration as well as a hearty meal. Mr. Nevill took great interest in his estate, whilst I devoted a great deal of time to my garden, which became quite a show-place in the county. We had seventeen hot-houses, and employed a good many men. Most of the tropical fruit-trees were there as well as orchids without number, and few plants of any rarity were lacking in the hot-houses, one of which, most unfortunately, became the scene of a sad catastrophe. In order to carry off the smoke from the furnaces which were employed for heating a large tropical fern-house, we had adopted the plan of erecting a huge chimney, which was to serve as a great concentrated outlet. Alas for all human experiments! Two under-gardeners sleeping in a building close to this chimney were most unfortunately suffocated, for the smoke, for some reason not having mounted as had been planned, penetrated into their sleeping quarters and proved their death. Poor men! they had been looking forward to a visit to the Chichester Horticultural Show, and the tragedy happened the

night before the eagerly anticipated day—it was all too dreadful—the men had been great favourites of mine, and for some time I could not bear to enter or even look at the new fern-house. We had, as I have said, many fine tropical trees, and when the property was sold in 1878, the Administration of Monte Carlo sent an agent to buy them, and many of them found a home in the pretty gardens surrounding the great Temple of Chance.

The second Duke of Wellington took a great interest in my horticultural experiments, and I used always to keep him informed of any botanical wonders which I might chance to discover. At one time one of the principal journals devoted to horticulture suddenly took to announcing a series of most astoundingly successful experiments which, it appeared, were being conducted by a certain gentleman fond of botanic research. He had, amongst other discoveries (so it was declared), discovered an easy method of cultivating the *Garcinia mangostana*, a plant which had hitherto been supposed to flourish only in a climate such as that of the Straits Settlements. The gentleman in question, however, said that by adopting his plan of cultivation the *Garcinia* would not only be found to thrive in this country, but also actually to produce flowers in great abundance. Another of his wonders was a particular kind of grass which would grow freely on any soil, and, if desired, attain to the height of the sugar-cane. Both the Duke and myself were exceedingly suspicious of these marvellous discoveries, but, my curiosity being aroused, I decided to ask the botanist to come and pay a visit to my garden,

the old Duke having arranged to be present on the occasion.

The Columbus of horticulture duly arrived, but it was not very long before both of us clearly saw that our suspicions had been fully justified, and that the successful cultivator of the *Garcinia mangostana* knew nothing whatever about that plant, and little, indeed, of any other. As a matter of fact, his whole botanic stock-in-trade was limited to a colossal fertility of imagination. He was, however, not an unamusing man, and when he wrote to me announcing the interesting fact that his wife had presented him with a daughter, I saw no particular reason why I should decline his pressing request to become godmother to 'Dorothy Garcinia,' as he said he proposed to call the child. I was, indeed, rather amused, and sent the customary present without a pang. The Duke, however, advised me to be careful in any dealings I might have with this botanist, whose mendacity had unfavourably impressed him. He was right, for shortly afterwards the imaginative disposition of Dorothy Garcinia's father took a more dangerous turn, and, having forged the name of one of his botanical correspondents, he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment which he served in Woking Gaol, whence constant appeals reached me for horticultural books and the use of any influence I might possess to obtain a remission of his sentence.

The mention of my dishonest botanist brings into my mind the recollection of an act of a directly opposite nature with which I once met, and which I cannot help recording.

One day, many years ago, I received a letter from a gentleman in which he said that, as his father's executor, he had discovered some papers showing that some money was owed to Mr. Nevill. The exact sum, he added, was not quite clear, but it appeared likely that it should be about £50. In reply, I wrote back that as far as I was concerned I possessed no paper whatever to show that anything was due, though I remembered Mr. Nevill's having once made mention of something of the sort ; should he, therefore, care to send me the sum he mentioned, I should accept it with the feeling that his behaviour had been honourable in no ordinary degree.

For a long time I heard nothing more of the matter, and had dismissed it from my mind, when one day came a most charming letter with a cheque for £250, which sum the writer said he had discovered, through some papers newly come to light, was the amount of his father's debt. I was very much struck with this act of scrupulous honesty, and as a memento purchased a diamond locket, so as it should not be forgotten. I may add that, in defiance of well-known prejudice and tradition, this most honourable of men was a lawyer.

There were a great many curiosities of different sorts in my garden, one of which, I think, was absolutely unique, having never been seen or, rather, heard anywhere else in England. I had sent me from China a number of pigeon-whistles made out of gourds, which were something like small organ pipes, and could be attached with great ease to a pigeon's tail. The effect produced by the

flight of these birds with whistles attached was extremely pretty, resembling Æolian harps, the whistles being all of a different note. People used to be considerably astonished at such heavenly music, and their bewilderment and puzzled faces afforded me great amusement. No one but myself, I believe, has ever organized such a winged orchestra, but should anyone care to make the experiment, I can assure them they will be well rewarded for their trouble.

Dangstein was not very far from Portsmouth, and we used sometimes to go and stay with Lord Frederick Fitzclarence, at that time Military Governor of that town. During one of these visits I came across a former servant of mine in rather a curious way. A short time before, when in London, I had been obliged to dismiss my German maid, who whilst I was ill had chosen to remain out every evening, the cause of this continuous absence being, I afterwards discovered, her love of the stage, which had led her to undertake different parts at some low theatre or penny gaff. The worst part of the business was that, being cast for the part of Marie Stuart, this Teutonic Thespian annexed a very handsome black velvet dress of mine in which to impersonate Scotland's ill-fated Queen, on the discovery of which I, of course, at once dismissed her. The evening we arrived at Portsmouth Lord Frederick Fitzclarence told us, 'You will be amused to-morrow night; we are going to take you to the local theatre, at which it is announced a grand company from the "Porte St. Martin" is to play.' I at once said:

'Perhaps my late maid has joined it'; and, sure enough, she had, for the next morning I received a note from the woman, who had somehow heard of my arrival, begging for my patronage of her entertainment. The most I can say of her is that she was better as an actress than as a maid.

CHAPTER VII

My experiments in silkworm culture—Neighbours in the country—Lady Featherstonhaugh—Sir Charles Taylor—Mr. Cobden—Sir John Hawkshaw—Lord Leconfield—Shooting-parties in old days—Sir Alexander Cockburn—His disgust at the Tichborne trial—Bishop Wilberforce and his wit—Mr. Brookfield and Dicky Doyle—Adelaide Kemble—Harrison Weir—The Rev. M. B. Berkeley intoxicates some ladies—Mr. Wilson's garden at Heatherbank—A horticulturist who dedicated his wife to Pomona.

AMONGST my various experiences in natural history, I at one time undertook, together with another lady, a plan for establishing a silkworm farm. I was in London at the time, and the difficulty was to obtain mulberry-leaves; however, we put our heads together, and struck on the idea of advertising in *The Times* for the leaves in question—with fatal result. The very next day I saw approaching my door two postmen hardly able to proceed under the weight of their burden of mulberry-leaves. This continued at intervals throughout the whole of the day, till rooms, and at last even cellars were filled. I went to my friend, whose dwelling-place was not a commodious one, and found her in utter despair, surrounded on all sides by hampers overflowing with the horrible leaf. Appalled at the avalanche of

foliage, which threatened to overwhelm us, after a brief council of war, we sent another advertisement off post-haste to say that the response to our appeal had been so warm that for the present we needed no more. We had indeed had an experience, and thus ended my idea of silkworm culture in London. In the country my efforts in this direction were more successful.

Lord and Lady Stratford de Redcliffe often stayed with us, and when we had a party in the house every day we would take our guests to many of the lovely country places near by, to which we were allowed to go, even when the host and hostess were absent. One of them was Up Park, a house full of china and wonderful furniture. The late Marquis of Hertford, of art renown, years ago offered £2,000 for a bureau, the work of the great artist David. The then possessor, Lady Featherstonhaugh, after an uneasy night, refused the offer, tempting as it seemed; but she is long dead, and a few years ago it was sold for more than double that sum. This lady was a Tory of the old school, and would not allow a Radical, even a Liberal, within her doors, saying that she did not like such animals.

We often went to another lovely place—Woolbeeding, the residence in former days of Lord Robert Spencer, where Fox and Pitt and other great men often visited. It is most beautifully situated, having a lovely garden, with the finest tulip-tree in England; while the house is filled with treasures of all kinds, in addition to a quantity of sketches, the work of Lady Diana Beauclerc, who in her day was a considerable artist. Enough cannot be said

of the beauty of the place, enhanced as it is by the memories it recalls of great politicians. Mr. Lascelles, who now owns it, is worthy of such a possession.

Near Woolbeeding are the ruins of Cowdray, the famous house of the great family of Montagu, where Queen Elizabeth stayed, and the oak still remains from which with bow and arrow she shot a stag, a feat which the virgin Queen often performed when she visited her faithful subjects. Cowdray is well known as an historic ruin, celebrated for the curse of the Abbess of Easebourne, who, on being expelled from her convent, declared the curse of fire and water on the family of Montagu, the Lords of Cowdray. The curse did its work, for in celebrating the coming of age of the young Lord Montagu the house was burnt down, and the young lord abroad was at the same time drowned going down the falls of Schaffhausen. The family being thus extinct, it came into the possession of Mr. Poyntz, and here again the curse was fulfilled, for he and his son were both drowned at Bognor. Mrs. Charles Roundell has written an exhaustive and excellent history of this place and all its famous history.

Another house in which we spent many a happy day was Hollycombe, which belonged to a queer old gentleman—Sir Charles Taylor, quite a typical old English gentleman. He was very kind to me, and in proof of it used to call me ‘dear little Twopenny,’ an epithet he declared I deserved on account of my minute stature. This house, or, rather, magnified cottage, was built by the architect Nash, being paid for by the proceeds of half a

lottery ticket which Sir Charles Taylor had been fortunate enough to purchase.

Those were pleasant days, with so many clever people living in the vicinity. We had Samuel Wilberforce, the then Bishop of Oxford ; Lord Zouche of Parham ; Mr. Cobden ; Sir John Hawkshaw, the great engineer, and many other pleasant neighbours, so, what with my friends and my plants, etc., I led a happy life, pretty well independent of the world's troubles. We often went visits to Petworth and Goodwood, in which I always delighted, both places being so beautiful and so full of interest, besides all the kindness I received from my hosts.

When we went to live in the country one of our first visitors was Colonel Wyndham, afterwards Lord Leconfield, whom I christened the 'King of West Sussex'—one of the old school, with very strong views about sport, which with him amounted almost to a sort of religion. On the occasion when he had driven over to call he received a dreadful shock. He had been shown into my sitting-room, where I was engaged in illuminating a book, a form of art (if modern illumination can be called art) which was very popular in early Victorian days. We were soon discussing all the local affairs, and I was just thinking what an agreeable man he was when his eyes suddenly fell upon a rug which was at my feet. 'What on earth is that you have there?' said he ; upon which, in the most innocent way, I answered : 'Oh, that is the skin of a fox—we caught it in a trap.' His face clouded over, and in solemn tones he said : 'Really, I don't think I ever ought to set foot in this house again.' He

looked so serious that I could not help bursting into a laugh, which, together with my frankness in having spoken of our terrible crime, so disarmed him that he forgave me, and we soon became the greatest of friends. Some of the pleasantest days I have ever spent were passed at Petworth, that wonderful treasure-house so full of beautiful things.

In the shooting season we used frequently to go and stay with our neighbours—shooting-parties then were very different things from what they are to-day, and many of the hosts did not care about their pheasants being killed off too quickly. One old gentleman, I remember, chancing to have a crack shot of the new school amongst his party, was convulsed with rage at the murderous execution which was being done, and at last, unable to bear it any longer, called out in a voice trembling with rage : ‘Perhaps when you have killed off all my pheasants you will be satisfied !’ I also recall the rage of an old nobleman whose ideas of a good bag would in these days be covered with ridicule. He had invited a very fashionable shot, who bore a great and deserved reputation for his accuracy of aim, and, desirous of showing good sport, decided to give him the place of honour at every beat. Things went well, and the host was delighted, anticipating that at the end of the day the crack shot would compliment him upon the tremendous bag. Instead of this, however, the Londoner merely said : ‘Thanks very much, Duke, for quite a nice little day,’ which remark, I may add, was exceedingly badly received.

Mr. Nevill and I were both very fond of Sir Alexander Cockburn, who became Lord Chief Justice of England, a clever, witty, and altogether

delightful man. He often used to come to us for shooting-parties, being devoted to that form of sport, though I fear, from what I have heard, anything but a first-class shot. He was very musical, and used to give little parties at which celebrated stars of the musical world used to display their talents, which, I must admit, were very much wasted upon me, for I have never made any pretence of caring for anything but the lightest compositions, though I once used to sing little songs and accompany myself upon the guitar ; beyond this I never attempted to soar. However, I used to go to Sir Alexander's parties, as I liked him so much, and though stern enough as a judge, he was in private life devoted to fun and amusement. He it was who tried the second Tichborne trial, which did not excite nearly as much interest as the first one, at which I used to be a pretty constant attendant, sitting next to the judge, 'Bovill,' who gave me my place. The second trial, however, which the Lord Chief Justice tried, did not interest me so much ; in fact, I never went at all. The General Election completely eclipsed its interest, much, I think, to the disappointment of Sir Alexander Cockburn, for he had been looking forward to it as the apotheosis of his career. Regretting the impossibility of accepting an invitation by reason of this trial, he wrote :

'LONDON,
December 19.

MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

'Alas ! the thing is impossible.

'We begin work again on the 29th of this month, having been obliged to adjourn before Christmas,

instead of after, on account of the members of the jury who are in trade.

‘I shall consequently be at work again on this abominable trial all the month of January.

‘I shall lose my winter as well as my summer vacation, and wish Claimant and the whole affair were, as Roger Tichborne ought to be, at the bottom of the sea.

‘Always yours,

‘A. E. C.’

In 1871 Sir Alexander Cockburn was at Strasburg the week after the capitulation, and saw that unfortunate city in all its ruin and desolation. Moved and angered by so much destruction, he criticised the Prussians in no lenient manner, as will appear from the following passage—an extract from a letter of his sent me at the time :

‘I never shall forget the scene, or pardon the barbarian hordes who aimed their murderous guns on helpless citizens in their burning homes, and inflicted wanton damage on the grand old cathedral.’

By some unlucky chance I always managed to invite the Lord Chief Justice to come and stay exactly at the time when his legal duties forbade his leaving London. He used to declare that I did it on purpose, and it was the cause of never-ending chaff. On one occasion, after sending one of these unfortunate invitations, I received the following. I must add that it was an understood thing for us to send him a goose at Christmas-time, but for some reason that particular year a turkey had been sent in its place.

' December 19.

' Perfidious woman ! How can you venture to mock me with delusive invitations ?

' You asked me to come to you on the 2nd of November. I explained to you that that day being the first day of the term, it was impossible for me to be absent from court. Acting upon this information, you have now—of course, after careful inquiry and consultation, as no jury would hesitate to find—selected for a further invitation the 11th of January, which is, I need not tell you, for you doubtless know it as well as I do, the *first day of the next term!!!* when, consequently, my coming to Dangstein is impossible !!!

' And you have the boldness to speak of your "affection"! You must take me to be that homely but honest bird, which you were under a solemn obligation to send me, but for which you treacherously substituted that singular specimen of leanness, that emaciated and cadaverous turkey.

' Time was when I looked on you as the paragon of your sex, but since you took to breeding worms and pigeons that whistle with their tails you have become a different woman. Still, I was not prepared for your asking me a second time on the first day of the term. In the words of a great legal luminary, such a proceeding is " mockery, a delusion, and a snare." But the deception is too transparent, the attempt at cajolery too plain. For who could be credulous enough to believe that you would a *second time* have pitched on *the first day of term* for your party, except with a deliberate purpose, and after

looking at the almanack to make sure of the impossibility of my coming ?

‘Mock me no more with such hollow assurances of friendship, nor deceive yourself in thinking that I fail to see through your false pretences.

‘Yours, but not on the 11th of January,

‘A. E. C.’

Samuel Wilberforce, the well-known Bishop of Oxford, lived not very far from us, and we used to see a great deal of this excellent and witty ecclesiastic, whom, besides, I was always meeting at Blenheim and Strathfieldsaye. He gave me the nickname of *Semper Viridis*, and used to be very fond of fun and chaff. He was an admirable talker, and very quick at repartee. There is a well-known story of some young men having endeavoured to drag him into controversy at a time when a series of tracts entitled ‘The Road to Heaven’ was creating a considerable sensation. The Bishop, however, proved too much for them, merely saying: ‘The best and only road to heaven I know is to turn to the right and go straight on.’

An admirable public speaker, he was once called upon at the dinner of a City Company (the Salters), of which he was an honorary member, to respond to the toast of ‘The Lords and Commons.’ ‘Gentlemen,’ said he, ‘I can only compare our two great legislative chambers to a clock, of which the House of Commons is the mainspring and the House of Lords the pendulum—a pendulum which wags, wags, wags, the while it keeps the mainspring in order, and prevents the clock from running down.’ A

better definition of the functions of the Upper Chamber it would be impossible to give.

Bishop Wilberforce often came to the evening service at the beautiful little church of Lavington, which was built by a curate, Mr. Laprimaudaye, who, a week after the completion of the edifice, went over to Rome, but could not take his church with him.

Speaking of churches, it has always appeared to me extraordinary that better arrangements are not made for opening some of their windows. In the great majority the sole means of admitting fresh air is a pane or two cut out of some saint's back, which is quite insufficient for ventilation. I remember mentioning this once to an exceedingly agreeable clergyman's wife, who quite agreed, whilst making me laugh by a story of the old woman employed to look after her church and see that it was kept thoroughly clean. Going to inspect it one afternoon, this lady said she had found the interior in by no means a satisfactory condition, in consequence of which she summoned the caretaker and administered a sound lecture, ending with, 'Now, mind, unless you choose to open the windows you must go, for I will not have the church full of dust and dirt; if this sort of thing continues we shall be having some of those horrible microbes coming in.'

The woman promised to be more careful in future, but astonished my friend by making the somewhat startling inquiry: 'But, ma'am, will you tell me, aren't these 'microbe people' communicants, that you are so anxious to keep them out?'

The Rev. Mr. Brookfield was a constant visitor of

ours, though he always declared to me that he did not care for the country as much as the town. Whenever I took him out for a walk and attempted to lead him off the highroad to look at any particularly striking view he used to protest, saying he much preferred the ordinary road to more picturesque but irregular paths. I recollect his telling us of an old woman whom he had known for many years exclaiming when she met him, ‘La, sir, I thought you was in glory long ago !’ a remark which had very much amused him.

Mr. Doyle the artist, known as Dicky Doyle, used also to be with us a good deal, and on one occasion, having set out to catch a train with Sir William Harcourt, and losing it owing to a breakdown, employed the time which had to be passed till the next left for town in composing a whimsical little series of sketches, which he sent me.

For many years at Easter the same party used to assemble, which, in addition to ourselves, consisted of Lord and Lady Airlie, Mr. and Mrs. Lowe, Mr. and Mrs. Sartoris, Mr. (afterwards Sir Frederick) Leighton, and that exceedingly gifted man Mr. Hamilton Aidé, whom I am glad to say I can still number amongst my living friends. Mrs. Sartoris before her marriage was Adelaide Kemble, a niece of the great Sarah Siddons, to whom she was said to bear a striking resemblance. A remarkable woman, she was especially noted for her singing, which even charmed me, though, as a rule, I am by no means fond of music. She would sing Shelley’s lovely little song ‘Good-night’ in an exquisite manner which I can never forget.

At Dangstein I used to keep a good many pets, the memory of which is still preserved, owing to the genius of the late Mr. Harrison Weir, who used frequently to come down to us—never, perhaps, was anyone so devoted to the animal creation as he. The pleasant little incident described below occurred many years ago ; even then it will be observed that the artist was in feeble health, though, contrary to his expectations, he lived for many years after the letter was written, dying, indeed, but quite recently:

‘ MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY NEVILL,

‘ Thank you for your letter. My daughter never looked in the pocket of the portmanteau ; she has now, and all is right. I am so sorry to have troubled you. I am a little better, but still very unwell and weak. I hope Mr. Nevill continues to improve in health, and that you are well. When I am well enough I shall look in for a chat.

‘ I must tell you of a little incident which occurred to me when returning to Kent from Dangstein. For years, as I told you, people had *told me* of the *good* my work had *done* and *was doing*, but I never could learn it in any other way, excepting by the publisher being well satisfied, etc. But the other day, when travelling, two gentlemen were talking in the compartment where I was sitting ; one had the *Animal World*. Presently he said : “ This is doing good, and more than the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.” “ Well,” said the other, “ I think the love of, and kindness to, animals has much increased of late years, and I believe it is *entirely* due to one man, a man by the name of Harrison

Weir, who has done it all by his pen and pencil." "There I quite agree with you," said the other. "It is wonderful the good this man has done," etc. You may guess how I felt as I sat in my corner. I *never, never* felt so *proud*, and never, never so *happy* before. Do you know I thought I should have *cried* I felt so *full of joy*, as it was such an uncalled-for *confirmation* of what I had worked for *night and day* for *more than thirty* years. But I am afraid my work is nearly ended (I hope not); I have only been able to work two days since I left you, and this is much pain and suffering.

'With sincere regards to yourself and Mr. Nevill,
believe me, my dear Lady Dorothy Nevill,

'Yours very truly,

(Signed) HARRISON WEIR.'

Mr. Harrison Weir, besides being an excellent artist, possessed a very considerable knowledge of natural history. The keeping of pigeons was one of his special hobbies. He once gave me some, but carelessly enough, after confiding them to the charge of the head gardener, I paid little further attention to them. A week or so later Mr. Harrison Weir came to pay us a visit, and on his arrival inquired: 'Well, how are the pigeons I sent you?' 'Quite well,' said I, 'and as happy as the day is long.' To which he rejoined, 'I know they are, for three days ago they all came back to their old home in my garden, and have remained there ever since.'

Mr. Weir made the most delightful sepia sketches, and amongst my treasures I especially value the portrait of a lovely Siamese cat which he painted

for me. He was also a proficient in the art of portraying wild Nature, whilst in sketching birds his talent has never since been equalled.

Another constant visitor of ours used to be the late Rev. M. B. Berkeley, a well-known authority in botanical circles. He was also a most learned mycologist, and had made a great study of fungi. I frequently went with him on rambles about the woods looking for the edible fungi, of which he possessed such a unique knowledge. Many of these, in spite of the contemptuous scorn with which most people regard them, are excellent when properly cooked, with a good sauce ; one species especially, the little *Marasmius oreades*, the fairy-ring, is particularly appetizing, as is also the excellent 'Morel' (*Morchella esculenta*), which, though fairly common in England, is little utilized for the purposes of the table.

Amongst dangerous fungi few are so brilliant in appearance as the beautiful 'strawberry fungus,' which possesses the peculiar faculty of inducing intoxication in anyone who ventures to eat it. In Russia poor people unable to obtain alcohol frequently use this fungus as a substitute. Mr. Berkeley once told me that some ladies living near him having manifested considerable interest in his researches, he naturally thought that they knew something of fungology, so coming one day upon some especially fine specimens of the strawberry fungus, he plucked a basketful, which he sent to them with a note, in which he said that he felt certain that, as connoisseurs, they would appreciate such a find.

The poor innocents, however, concluding that whatever Mr. Berkeley sent them must be good to eat, at once proceeded to have the fungi cooked, and partook largely of them, with the result that after a very short time their servants became horrified at their condition, and were eventually obliged to put them to bed in a completely dazed and stupefied state, as they informed Mr. Berkeley when he called the next morning in order to discuss the scientific interest of his gift. I shall never forget his intensely humorous description of this incident, for he was a delightful companion and excellent talker. Alas! like so many of my friends, he has long been gone.

One of the most interesting gardens I ever saw was the one at Heatherbank, Weybridge Heath, belonging to Mr. G. F. Wilson, who died but a few years ago; it now belongs to the Royal Horticultural Society. Just before Mr. Wilson's death he asked me to come and go over it, and on my arrival I found my host in a bath-chair, with another ready for me, and so in these comfortable conveyances we were conveyed over his domain, which immensely interested me, for my host was a great authority on wild-gardening, which he had carried to absolute perfection.

Mr. Wilson was a most clever man, and in addition to his great horticultural knowledge was possessed of considerable scientific attainments, being a first-class chemist. He was, indeed, never given the credit for the invention, which was absolutely his own, of distilling glycerine in a current of superheated steam, which is the only method by

which it can be obtained pure. Before this discovery it was impossible to utilize glycerine as is done to-day, when it is employed in a thousand ways—in medicine, in manufactures, and the arts—and it is much to be regretted that Mr. Wilson never received any recognition of the great service he had done to the world.

I used to keep up a correspondence with many people interested in horticulture, including Mr Darwin and Sir William and Sir Joseph Hooker, all of whom took great interest in my garden. Amongst local horticulturists I recall one in particular—a queer character who lived close to us, and was known in the locality as ‘the Frenchman,’ on account of being supposed to have once visited Boulogne. I got into correspondence with him about some plant or other which I eventually regretted, for his letters arrived more frequently than was pleasant; and, besides, he was a poet, and therefore not inappropriately possessed of a certain wildness of disposition bordering upon insanity. When his wife died he declared his intention of, as he called it, ‘dedicating her to Pomona,’ by which he meant burying the body of the poor woman under an old apple-tree in his garden. I remember that in the end the authorities had to interfere, the proposed dedication not being allowed to take place, whilst the poet followed the coffin to a grave in the churchyard, uttering the most terrible imprecations against those who had forcibly prevented him from carrying out his wishes.

CHAPTER VIII

Society then and now—Wealth takes the place of birth—The new commercial aristocracy—The Stock Exchange invades Mayfair—Hudson, the railway king, and his wife—The decay of conversation.

SOCIETY to-day and Society as I formerly knew it are two entirely different things ; indeed, it may be questioned whether Society, as the word used to be understood, now exists at all.

There are no doubt sets—the smart set, the racing set, and I do not know how many more coteries of individuals, specialists in frivolity. But Society as it used to be—a somewhat exclusive body of people, all of them distinguished either for their rank, their intellect, or their wit—is no more.

In the old days good talkers—men and women of brilliant conversational powers—were the people whose presence at country-house or dinner-party was the most sought for ; they were, indeed, the dictators of the dinner-table, where they ruled with almost undisputed sway. An especial instance of this was Mr. Bernal Osborne, who, brilliant, witty, and caustic, was, in his way, as merciless an autocrat as any Czar or Sultan.

Now all is changed, and wealth has usurped the

place formerly held by wit and learning. The question is not now asked, ‘Is So-and-so clever?’ but, instead, ‘Is So-and-so rich?’

The desire of the old-time *nouveau riche* was to get into Society; to-day many of the best of this highly-esteemed and much-run-after class bitterly complain that they cannot keep out of it. Invitations pour in upon them very much in proportion to their supposed or actual wealth. Whilst it must be admitted that a large number of newly-enriched millionaires are clever and more cultivated mentally than the Society which hurls open its portals at the mention of their name, illiteracy, ignorance, or vulgarity are no bar—rather the contrary, for such slight failings are easily glossed over with the name of originality. The reason for all this is easy to see. In old days Society was an assemblage of people who, either by birth, intellect, or aptitude, were ladies and gentlemen in the true sense of the word. For the most part fairly, though not extravagantly, dowered with the good things of the world, it had no ulterior object beyond intelligent, cultured, and dignified enjoyment, money-making being left to another class which, from time to time, supplied a selected recruit to this *corps d'élite*. Now all is changed; in fact, Society (a word obsolete in its old sense) is, to use a vulgar expression, ‘on the make.’

The real truth is that modern conditions have rendered such a state of affairs inevitable. To begin with, the standard of wealth has largely increased. When Samuel Warren wrote his famous novel ‘Ten Thousand a Year,’ such an income was considered princely, and its fortunate possessor rich beyond the

dreams of avarice. What is it to-day? Why, your modern millionaire gives as much for a single picture whilst up-to-date entertaining on such a sum is hardly possible. Ten thousand a year is still, of course, a snug fortune, sufficient to have a little shooting, some hunting, a modest house in the country, and a small *pied-à-terre* in town; but it is not riches, nor, according to latter-day ideas, anything like it, though, oddly enough, the purchasing power of money is greater rather than less. The vast and, indeed, colossal fortunes of modern days have changed everything. What was luxury fifty years ago is now the merest comfort, whilst what was then considered comfort is now called squalor.

Half a century ago a rich man—let us say a landed proprietor (the wealthy of that day as a rule drew the greater part of their revenue from land; but my friend Mr. Cobden changed all that)—was quite content to live the greater part of the year on his estate, where he amused himself with the sport which satisfied the moderate taste of those days. If he had not a house in town, he hired one for three months or so, when he would bring up his wife and daughters for the season. Entertainments were certainly given—entertainments the comparative modesty of which would to-day provoke a contemptuous smile—and the season over, the family would once more return to the country, there to remain until the following year. This mode of life was in some cases varied by a voyage (no other word is applicable) abroad.

Country-house parties were few, but lasted longer than at present, when people go hundreds of miles

to stay a day. Life, in short, was slow, rather solemn, inexpensive, not undignified, but, according to modern ideas, dull.

What is the life of the rich man of to-day? A sort of firework! Paris, Monte Carlo, big-game shooting in Africa, fishing in Norway, dashes to Egypt, trips to Japan. In fact, no one knows—he himself does not know—where he may be any given week. He has, of course, a house in town, but so busy is he that as often as not he is too hurried to go there, and puts up at some fashionable hotel, where the arrangements are in reality more convenient than at his own home, and where he can entertain with the greatest possible ease. At the proper time he goes to the country to shoot, more often than not entertaining a large party, who disperse the moment the last shot has been fired and the last pheasant killed. Very likely he has an expensive garden, of which, when not too busy, he may, in the summer, obtain a glance, running down from London in a motor for that purpose.

His expenses are in all probability enormous—a wife whose extravagance he is too indolent to check (her expenditure seeming insignificant by the side of the immense sums which are daily at stake in the City); children who also spend largely; houses, hotels, horses, motors, pictures, and other works of art, and very likely, in addition to all of these, most costly of all—a yacht.

Such individuals have changed the whole standard of living, and imported the bustle of the Stock Exchange into the drawing-rooms of Mayfair. When this incursion first began, English Society, shrewd

and far-seeing enough in its way, easily perceived that, unless it swallowed the new millionaires, the millionaires, keen - witted, pushing, clever, and energetic, would engulf it in their capacious maw. So everywhere doors were flung open for Croesus to enter ; his faults were overlooked, his virtues (and many a one really had virtues) lauded ; historic houses passed into his hands, whilst the original possessors besought his good offices for their sons embarking on City careers. On the whole, the result has not, perhaps, been bad, for everything must change and pass away, and there was no reason why 'Society,' a relic of aristocratic days, should have proved an exception to this rule.

The new conquerors have taught their willing serfs many of the arts by which they themselves rose to wealth and power, and I am told that there are now many scions of noble houses who exhibit nearly as much shrewdness in driving bargains in the City as a South African millionaire himself ; whilst, on the other hand, the sons of the millionaires in several instances do not conceal their dislike for business, and lead an existence of leisured and extravagant ease, which would not compare unfavourably with that of a 'blood' of the eighteenth century.

So matters adjust themselves, but in the interval Society has been transformed. Many years ago, when I first knew London Society, it was more like a large family than anything else. Everyone knew exactly who everybody else was, and it was extremely difficult — nay, almost impossible — for a stranger to obtain a place until credentials had been

carefully examined and discussed. Mere wealth was no passport. A very brilliant circle it was, too, containing many people of great intellectual gifts who conversationally held undisputed sway. To-day, I think, they would be considered bores, for conversation is now pretty well a lost art.

The whole conditions of life were different when I first began to go out. Now London is full of life in the winter, but at that time hardly anyone remained once the season was over. The laws of etiquette, now so lax, were severe in the extreme. For instance, it would have been considered a dreadful thing for a lady of birth to go out walking without a man-servant behind her. I remember that the old Duchess of Cleveland (Lady William Poulett that was) was the last lady who when she went out was always followed by a footman bearing a cane. Cabs were not considered at all proper vehicles for ladies to go in, whilst omnibuses were absolutely tabooed, which to-day is by no means the case.

In the forties none of the millionaires had yet appeared. There were rumours of Hudson, the railway king, and his wife, but they were never in Society, which, however, was amused by the reports of their doings which reached it. One of these told how Mrs. Hudson, when she had a dinner-party, was wont to say to her maid, 'Dress me for ten, dress me for twenty,' tempering the magnificence of her apparel according to the number of her guests. The forties and fifties were aristocratic days, when the future conquerors of Society were still 'without the gate.' The vast increase of railways, however, ended all this exclusiveness, and very soon the old

social privileges of birth and breeding were swept aside by the mob of plebeian wealth which surged into the drawing-rooms, the portals of which had up till then been so jealously guarded.

Since that time not a few of that mob have themselves obtained titles, and now quite honestly believe they are the old aristocracy of England. No one deplores the inroads of democracy more than they, and their laments for the old days, when in reality their progenitors were engaged in prosaic but profitable occupations, are somewhat amusing to hear. Some, it is true, are quite tolerable imitations of the great nobles of the past ; but could the real thing be placed side by side with its copy the difference would easily appear. However, it must be said that, all things considered, this new plutocratic class has not been undeserving of praise. Public-spirited and often generous, they temper such aristocratic vices as they practise with the sterner and more solid qualities inherited from the excellent tradesmen to whose industry and enterprise they owe their present position. Many are munificent patrons of the arts, surrounding themselves with the beautiful eighteenth-century portraits of the class they have conquered, which willingly cedes them, in order to have the wherewithal not to sink utterly out of sight.

It is, I think, a good deal owing to the preponderance of the commercial element in Society that conversation has sunk to its present dull level of conventional chatter. The commercial class has always mistrusted verbal brilliancy and wit, deeming such qualities, perhaps with some justice,

frivolous and unprofitable. The old leisured aristocracy of the past delighted in gathering together people of conversational power, and for this reason alone certain individuals whose sole credentials were their wit and mental cultivation were accorded a place in Society. There were several such men, of whose origin nothing was known or asked, whose claim to social consideration lay in cultivated and well-stored brains—these were welcomed without demur. A brilliant conversationalist enjoyed special privileges, and when he talked other people were content to listen. Now people do not talk : they chatter.

CHAPTER IX

Bernal Osborne—Nature of his wit—Some specimens—Hatred of pomposity—His father's extraordinary artistic knowledge—‘B. O.’ as a politician—His letters to me—A voracious reader and occasional poet—Letter on his death from Mrs. Higgins.

AN autocrat of the dinner-table, at which his sway was practically never questioned, Bernal Osborne occupied a perfectly unique position. He literally did not care what he said, for he was, on account of his cleverness, accorded a license which to-day would appear inconceivable. His wit was of the kind to which a butt was very essential, and, whatever society he was in, a butt he would find. Relying a great deal upon ridicule, he did not as a rule say things which lingered in one's memory, for his chief method of arousing amusement was spirited banter and attack, in which he was supreme. Well do I remember his nicknaming a very grave and dignified politician ‘the high-stepping hearse-horse.’

His wit, indeed, was not seldom exceedingly personal. Discovering, for instance, at an election which he was fighting that a certain hostile placard had been written by an individual with a slight twist in the neck, he stigmatized him as the man ‘with the Tyburn face—a creature who had been imperfectly

operated upon.' More pleasant was his definition of a gourmet as 'one who prefers the woodcock's trail to the nightingale's song.' The English Sunday he once described as 'a day of sanctity in which indolent ineptitude passes for religious repose,' and the House of Lords as 'a dustbin, into which burnt-out reputations and cinders were constantly being thrown.' A certain lady he compared to a good housewife, on account of her treating her lovers on the same principle as her dresses : when she had worn either long enough, she turned them about their business or on to friends. Of a somewhat colourless character he said, 'He has no affections at all, except rheumatic ones.'

Possessed of very exceptional and apt descriptive powers, 'B. O.', as we used to call him, had a knack of exactly hitting off people's characteristics, though, as has before been mentioned, his wit, though by no means inspired by personal malice, was very frequently far too cutting and keen. Amongst his intimates, of course, this did not matter in any very great degree, for, knowing and understanding his ways, they would either bear his attacks with equanimity or would answer him back to the best of their abilities, without, however, I must add, much hope of getting the best of the contest. Ever more witty than humorous, he was essentially a social satirist, and loved to attack that solemn pomposity which in so many cases is but a cloak used to conceal fatuous ignorance. Towards bigots he was merciless, as any of that tribe whom he might chance to encounter had good reason to know. There were times, however, when it must be con-

fessed he would use his intellectual weapons against quite inoffensive people, and behave in what could only be called a cruel manner, and I have heard of mild individuals having been driven from the dinner-table by his scathing sarcasms. Nevertheless, he was popular and had many friends, for his occasional onslaughts were soon forgiven, it being well understood that they were 'part of the game.'

I knew 'B. O.' very well. He used to call me 'the revolver,' saying I hit with more than one barrel; this was by reason of my being great friends with his wife as well as with himself. Personally, I never minded much what he used to say, as I did not take him seriously, but would answer him back, which was the right attitude to assume towards him. There were people, however, whom he positively terrorized, and to these he was at times quite merciless. In spite of this, he was by no means a bad-hearted man; perhaps the greatest real compliment ever paid him was by a lady, herself of great talent and cultivation, who once said to me: 'I think I like "B. O." best when he is least witty!'

Mr. Bernal Osborne's father, Mr. Bernal,* was, as is well known, a very celebrated connoisseur of art. His collection was sold in 1855, one of the most celebrated art sales which ever took place. So good a judge was Mr. Bernal that dealers would eagerly try to extract an opinion from him, for in artistic matters his word was regarded as absolute law. He owned considerable property in the West Indies, which eventually proved exceedingly unprofitable.

* Ralph Bernal married Miss Osborne in 1844, at which time he assumed the surname of Osborne.

His son used bitterly to deplore the bad financial condition into which it had sunk ; indeed, the abolition of slavery rendered it pretty well valueless. On one occasion he brought me a pot of tamarinds with the remark : ‘I bring you all that is left of my Trinidad estate.’

In the House of Commons Bernal Osborne enjoyed a brilliant reputation for his witty and clever utterances. Whenever he rose to speak, everyone anticipated a treat, which was on such occasions, indeed, rarely denied to the House, of which ‘B. O.’ was a sort of spoilt darling. Members welcomed his sallies, and willingly laughed *with*, but never *at*, him, for, as a great statesman said, ‘he was the chartered libertine of debate.’ During his Parliamentary career he sat for a great many different places—in fact, Lord Beaconsfield once commented upon this in the House of Commons, saying that he had really become confused as to what constituency Mr. Bernal Osborne might chance to represent, as he changed so often. On the hustings ‘B. O.’ used sometimes to indulge in wild and irresponsible flights of oratory ; at the Dover Election, for instance, in the fifties, his colleague (Sir William Russell) being away in India, where the Mutiny was raging, Mr. Bernal Osborne said : ‘Whoever votes against my friend and myself stabs an absent hero in the back !’ He was too much of a wild Irishman to attain high Parliamentary distinctions, but, nevertheless, as Secretary to the Admiralty during the Aberdeen Ministry, he did extremely well, rigorously controlling himself and exhibiting a great deal of quiet tact.

A ruthless critic of War Office methods and administration, he recognised the need of an efficient army, whilst never failing to attack the enormous expense of our military system. ‘In one sense,’ said he, ‘the old proverb that one Englishman is worth two Frenchmen is true, for as a soldier he certainly costs double as much. A successful general,’ he went on to remark, ‘is the most expensive luxury of all.’

Mr. Bernal Osborne was a good correspondent, and often wrote to me, especially when he was in Ireland, about which country he was generally inclined to be pessimistic, as will appear from the following :

‘Saturday, December 23, 1865.

‘M. D. L. D.,*

‘Although detesting anniversaries and Church feasts and fasts, I must not let Christmas Day slip by without uttering my sincere commonplaces to you and yours on the occasion ; but, to say the truth, I am in anything but a “merry” mood. It is grievous to reside in a country where one has so few sympathies, and which is always on the eve of an outbreak, for this movement, called “Fenian,” which appears so ridiculous in England, is a more serious matter here. The disaffection is so widespread, one never feels secure for the future ; indeed, the gulf which separates rich and poor here is wider than in any other country, and each day adds to the mutual distrust. How much I should prefer a small cottage near Rogate to a mansion in this country you may imagine !

* My dear Lady Dorothy.

‘Your last note, though laconic, was worthy of your great progenitor, H. Walpole ; he could scarcely have topped your neat allusion to May’s safety lucifers ; it was highly appreciated by me. Lady Molesworth writes that Lady — has got an Irish ague ; it is, unfortunately, the only thing she caught in this country. Did you read the drowning of a girl and her governess in the Dover packet ? I knew the poor creature well—a playfellow of my girls. I could not give you a better proof of my “caring” than writing in my present humour. If I could get away it would be pleasant to be playing snapdragon with you.

‘Adio, always yours,
‘M. A.’*

A few days later as a New Year’s greeting he wrote :

‘M. D. L.,

‘December 31, 1865.

‘Here I am on the last day of 1865 writing to you with the same feelings and in unchanged spirit as on the last day of 1864 ; indeed, you cannot but acknowledge that my forte is a bull-dog kind of constancy, which does not easily relax its hold, and retains its prepossessions in spite of Manx cats ! Botanical correspondents ! ex-Ministers ! ex-Ambassadors ! (Clanwilliam to wit) and assiduous Dukes ! If my letters have not been regular it is not owing to rheumatism or romance, as you suggest, but to the frightful gales which are still raging and interrupting our postal communications. Christmas,

* Most attached.

in addition to its accustomed dulness, has passed with some alarm in this country, and we are still living in daily apprehension of an insurrection. Though you will read of Lady Waldegrave giving balls in Dublin, great panic is in that city, the police armed, and soldiers prepared to act. It is supposed the Government have private information of some contemplated rising ; here we know nothing, except that if anything occurs in Dublin it will fare badly with those who reside in the country, and are left to the mercies of malcontents and pillagers ! Having lost all feeling of security, I should be delighted to quit this country, but am obliged to feign a confidence I do not feel, and remain ; but if things do not settle down shall induce my feminines to cross the water. It is impossible to deny the sad fact that the people here are entirely disaffected to their form of government, and are ripe for any change.

It would seem as if the rage for emigrating had extended itself to the snipes and woodcocks. I contemplated forwarding a basket of these birds to Dangstein, but have not been able to procure any. We shot this place last week without seeing a snipe or woodcock, so take intentions for deeds. I have neither seen nor heard of J. S. Wortley, but conclude he is with his sister. You dearly like attracting all sorts ; no matter whether botanists or sententious Dukes, all go down ! This may be ascribed to an undue cultivation of *tropical* productions ! Lady Molesworth wrote me word of your “goings on” at Strathfieldsaye, warning me that “*my laurels were in danger*” ! It is to be hoped

the Duchess will take alarm, and forbid your being asked so often.

‘Your anxious and M. A.’

In August, 1876, Mr. Bernal Osborne went for a cure to Carlsbad, of which health resort he formed no flattering opinion.

‘CARLSBAD,

‘August 17, 1876.

‘MY DEAR LADY,

‘After four weeks’ hard drinking of these waters “hot without” (to adopt a tavern epithet), I am about to quit this odious locality, the resting-place of bad smells and dull society ; it remains to be proved how far the early hours, meagre fare, and deplorable dulness will ultimately be beneficial to one’s health. If the goddess of health presides at Carlsbad she is a lady of bad taste ! A Montgomery could support it no longer, and has left for Teplitz, where we follow on Monday next. Not that Teplitz is much better, but only a short distance from this, and near to Prague, which is worth visiting, and as I am condemned to solitary bathing for fourteen days, Teplitz is my prison. All the world knows your *secret* information about the appointment of the Duke of Marlborough. Will it take you to Dublin ? I have lately fallen in with a barrister who knew all the people concerned in this “Balham Mystery”; he describes Dr. Gully as a most agreeable, genial, and highly-informed person, Mrs. B. ladylike and attractive, *Mr. B.* very mean and snobbish, subject to violent passion, with a taint of lunacy in his family, and agrees with me that Mr. Bravo took whatever

poison killed him either inadvertently or on purpose, distracted by his jealousy of Dr. G. and Mrs. B.'s love of Marsala. The inquest was worthy of a Spanish inquisitor. I sympathize entirely with Mrs. B. This creation of the Earl of Beaconsfield reads like the conclusion of a novel. Of course, health is the excuse for the transformation. With all his genius, Dizzy loves tinsel ! I cannot help looking upon this elevation as a *full* to such a man ! Teplitz, Bohemia, my direction.

'Yours always,
'R. O.*'

Mr. Osborne was a voracious reader of history and biography, and knew a great deal about the artistic contents of old country houses and of the vicissitudes of the families which had been in possession of them. Never, perhaps, was he more agreeable than when he could be induced to indulge in personal anecdote and reminiscence, abandoning for the time being that satirical tone which, as he himself would, when in certain moods, admit, had cost him much. Almost abnormally endowed with the derisive faculty, his character was one which, above all, abhorred discipline or control, and for this reason the literary instincts which he undoubtedly possessed were never given full opportunity for development. The best thing he ever wrote was, I think, 'The Chaunt of Achilles,' some clever verses giving a sketch of London society, which appeared in the *New Sporting Magazine* for September, 1838. These were supposed to be spoken by the statue of Achilles in

* Ralph Osborne.

Hyde Park, erected in 1822, as everyone knows, with money subscribed by the ladies of England in honour of the Duke of Wellington :

‘Long had that statue raised by British fair
To Arthur’s fame deplored the wintry air.

* * * * *

Wondering why English ladies turned him forth
A naked stranger in the chilling North.’

Achilles proceeds to comment in amusing fashion upon the appearance and foibles of the various fashionable frequenters of the Park :

‘Patting the crest of his well-managed steed,
Proud of his action, D’Orsay vaunts the breed ;
A coat of chocolate, a vest of snow,
Well brush’d his whiskers, as his boots below ;
A short-napp’d beaver, prodigal in brim,
With trousers tighten’d to a well-turn’d limb ;
O’er play, o’er dress, extends his wide domain,
And Crockford trembles when he calls a main.
No joys for him can vulgar pleasures yield,
Good taste his forte, he sticks to Chesterfield.

* * * * *

Following his track succeeds a numerous band,
Who vainly strive to work their fours-in-hand.
For Richmond bound, I view them passing by,
Their hands unsteady and their reins awry ;
Some scratch their panels, some their horses’ knees—
Beaufort and Payne, I class ye not with these ;
For who so smoothly skims along the plain
As Beaufort’s duke ? What whip can equal Payne ?

For many years the authorship of these verses was a mystery. As a matter of fact, Mr. Osborne, then quite a young man, received £15 for writing them. In a sequel to this poem, entitled ‘George the Third, in reply to Achilles,’ published in the

Sporting Magazine for April, 1839, there are some clever, if rather caustic, lines upon Lady Blessington:

'Queen of this band, behold a portly dame,
Gifted with fortune and well known to fame ;
For beauty once, but now for dinners prized,
And novels by another hand revised.
Winter and summer, autumn, spring roll on !
Fixed thro' all months see Lady B(lessing)ton !
Bards and sub-editors infest her rout
With peers renowned for nothing but the gout !
Skilful both truth and flattery to blend,
A steady hater, but a constant friend !
Long may she ride from care and sorrow free,
Luxurious votary of a *vis-à-vis*.'

In spite of this none too flattering description, 'B. O.' was on more or less good terms with Lady Blessington, sometimes bringing her salmon from the river Suir, which flowed by his property in Ireland. On one occasion when she had particularly begged him for one of these fish, he found on his arrival in London that he had quite forgotten all about it, so proceeding to Groves, the Bond Street fishmonger, he directed that the finest salmon in the shop should be sent to Lady Blessington, together with a note in which he said: 'I am sending you your salmon, which though late is *Sure*.'

The fishmonger, however, sent his trade card as well as the note, on receiving which Lady Blessington, in her acknowledgment, somewhat wittily wrote that 'a salmon from the Groves of Bond Street would no doubt taste quite as good as a salmon from the Groves of Blarney.'

Mr. Osborne at one time showed leanings towards becoming a writer for the stage, and actually wrote

a five-act comedy called ‘The Best Society ; or, £ s. d.’, which, however, was never produced. Macready, who had read the play, advised him to remodel it, and praised the talent of its author. Nevertheless, his literary efforts in later life were limited to epilogues written for private theatricals, and to occasional pieces of verse addressed to friends on special occasions.

There is no doubt but that Bernal Osborne was a man of singular intellectual power, and one who might have shone in almost any sphere had he chosen to concentrate and discipline his mind ; but I do not believe that he was ever really ambitious. Whilst very fond of society, the intense effort and serious application which is the only path to high political distinction were not at all to his taste ; nevertheless, as an essentially independent politician (a type which now, alas ! is extinct), he cannot be said to have been altogether unsuccessful.

Mr. Bernal Osborne died in 1882, being in his last days tended with the greatest devotion by his daughter, the Duchess of St. Albans, one of the sweetest and dearest women who ever came into this world. The following letter from Mrs. Higgins, whose husband was so celebrated as ‘Jacob Omnium,’ casts a pleasant light upon a side of Bernal Osborne’s character not generally known to the world.

‘BESTWOOD LODGE,

‘ARNOLD, NOTTS,

‘January 10, 1882.

‘MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘Many thanks for your kind letter. As you wish for more details, I send you a few lines to tell

you the funeral is over, and the remains of our dear old friend are laid in the churchyard here. By his express wish everything was carried out simply and quietly. I think it is a consolation to Grace to feel he lies in a grave near her home, and that the loving father, so devoted to her, was carefully nursed under her roof in his last days. She bears up wonderfully, and her health, thank God, is much better. It is, indeed, no common sorrow to lose, in little more than a year and a half, a beloved mother and father, and I fear, as time goes on, Grace will more and more realize the blank in her life. She has been immensely gratified by the extraordinary amount of sympathy she has received, and warm regrets for one who has really done innumerable acts of kindness, eliciting very sincere gratitude ; and at the last it is a real source of consolation to think of one we mourn having been in life of use. We all knew the brilliant, agreeable qualities of Mr. Osborne, but few, perhaps, have heard of his many great acts of kindness. I fear, now that the grave has closed over him, and the many things that have occupied Grace during the last week are accomplished, she will feel more fully what it is to lose one whose judgment and intellect she had been long accustomed to lean upon, and who was devoted to her. I will let you know when we return to town. Just now she wishes us to remain here. Poor Lord Lismore, who came for the funeral, is very sincerely grieved. With kind love, believe me, dear Lady Dorothy,

‘ Yours affectionately,

‘ E. HIGGINS.’

Mr. Bernal Osborne, indeed, despite his love of satire, was a good friend and one with a kind heart, ever ready to assist those to whom Fate had been unkind.

As a public man his love of fun and unequalled powers of ridicule were greatly against him in a country where gravity passes current for wisdom. Besides this, the very keenness of his satire was a stumbling-block. He himself once said : ‘No one knows what my jokes have cost me.’

Mr. Osborne’s public career is, I think, best summed up in his own words, uttered to a friend after his defeat at Waterford in 1869. He said : ‘I started in the race of life with many colleagues. Some of these have become Cabinet Ministers, others entered the Peerage, and a few, as the last resource of noble minds, have accepted baronetcies ; and here am I, because I preserved my honour and independence, and was willing to toady to no man, still plain Ralph Bernal Osborne.’

CHAPTER X

Lord Ellenborough—His dread of a ‘rough electorate’—His mental vivacity and vigour—Dignified protest against the Reform Bill of 1867—Gloomy forebodings as to the future of the British Empire—Anguish at the massacre of Cawnpore—Supports the French in 1870—Contempt for sentimentalism—His opinions about Cobden and Peel—Opposition to the Abyssinian expedition—Death in 1871—An aristocrat of another age.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH, the son of the famous judge, took a great interest in my sister and myself from the time when we first went into the world, and kept up this friendship with me till the day of his death. As a young man he had been of strikingly handsome appearance ; I hardly remember anyone who looked so thoroughly well-bred ; the noble to his finger-tips, he had the grand manner and dignified bearing which distinguished the gentlemen of the old school.

He had been Governor-General of India in the days when it took five months to make the voyage, and during his term of office had inaugurated a very independent and somewhat bellicose policy, much to the annoyance of the East India Company.

Born in 1790, he had lived to see the old order pass away—much, I may add, to his regret, for he had but small belief in the wisdom of democratic government, and dreaded the advent of new and

socially inferior men in the House of Commons. Writing in 1868, he said :

‘SOUTHAM DELABERE,
‘CHELTENHAM,
‘August 23, 1868.

‘MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘I hope you did not suffer more than inconvenience from the heat. It made me very languid.

‘I am glad to see that the candidates are men of the same class as heretofore. As yet no roughs have presented themselves, but I fear that when the enormous increase of rough electors becomes known we shall see some strange candidates and strange men, perhaps, in the House of Commons.

‘I do not think the Conservatives are fighting their battle well. They should make it appear to be nothing but a question between Protestant and Roman Catholic. In Ireland it really is nothing more. There the Protestants are sold by Mr. Gladstone.

‘As for confidence in Mr. Disraeli, it is ridiculous to speak of it.

‘As for India, it really is too serious a thing to make a job of it, and to make the selection of a Governor-General a question of party convenience. In circumstances of danger all depends upon the Governor-General alone. There are but two men of whom I could venture to say that they are fit—Lord Salisbury and Lord Stanley. The latter could not go. Lord Salisbury ought to be asked. I think he has ambition enough to go.

‘Yours very sincerely,
‘ELLENBOROUGH.’

Lord Ellenborough retained quite youthful powers of enjoyment up to an advanced age, and entered warmly into all schemes for the enlivening of local life, writing to me in 1865 of the Gloucester musical festival a letter betokening the great interest which he had taken in it :

‘MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘It was very kind of you to write to me. I was completely knocked up by that music meeting. In four nights I did not get in all twelve hours of sleep. I attended four oratorios and three concerts, and entertained eighty people each day at the best luncheon I could give in the Deanery. However, it was all quite right to do this, and I am very well satisfied. I told some of those who objected to the festival that if they would read the writings of Solomon, a person at least as wise as most bishops, they would feel sure that, had he been a Gloucestershire gentleman, he would certainly have been a steward—nay, more, he would have brought his family, large as it was, into Gloucester—nay, more still, if there had been any lady in the same relation to him in which the Queen of Sheba stood to the writer of the Proverbs, he would certainly have asked her to be of his party.

‘Certainly, it would never have occurred to a real Solomon as it did to our representative of Solomon, the Bishop, that the time of the festival was the most opportune for crossing the sea and seeking instruction in foreign travel. The only foolish thing he did not do was to climb the Matterhorn. I rather wish he had had a desire of that distinction.

'Oh, Lord, what fools these bishops are !
'I am going to give a ball. You will think I am
going mad the other way.

'Yours most sincerely,
'ELLENBOROUGH.'

Possessing very quick powers of wit, he would often utilize them in the way of versification with singularly appropriate effect. On one occasion, speaking of some politicians who had not reaped the exact benefits from the triumph of their party which they had expected, he wrote :

'I have reminded some disappointed friends of mine of two Latin verses in the speech of the Public Orator at Cambridge to Charles II. when he visited the University after the Restoration. They may be Englished thus literally :

'No one has more for your returning burned,
And no one less has felt that you've returned ;'

or, more naturally, thus :

'Oh, how I've wished you back ! Now back you've got ;
And, what seems very strange, I feel it not.'

Lord Ellenborough had been twice married, his first wife having been the sister of the celebrated Lord Castlereagh. The engagement originated in 1815 at Vienna, during the time that the Congress was taking place.

Though retaining to the very end of his life great mental vivacity and vigour, his sympathies, I think, lay with the past, for the sordid vulgarity of modern life greatly ruffled a mind which was essentially aristocratic. An excellent correspondent, he used

to write to me on writing-paper the edges of which were gilt, a pretty old custom now totally extinct.

After settling down at Southam, his place near Cheltenham, Lord Ellenborough came to London only when Parliament was sitting, preferring to remain in the country, where, however, he entertained the neighbourhood occasionally, having little plays of his own writing acted. He would also give dances to his tenantry, for, old as he was, the spirit of the eighteenth century was in him, and he loved to see young people amusing themselves. Of one of these entertainments he wrote :

‘ Think of my giving a great farmers’ ball the other day. I was surprised to observe the great improvements in manners, dress, and dancing. Some of the girls might have danced at Old Almack’s, but I was guilty of a monstrous fib when I told them that I could not pay them a greater compliment than in saying they were not inferior to their mothers. They are inferior as women. Nature omits figures now in fashioning women’s bodies—the more is the pity.’

Though once possessed of quite extraordinary powers of oratory, Lord Ellenborough felt himself too old to deliver a speech against the Reform Bill of 1867, which was especially obnoxious to him, imbued as he was with a great mistrust of power being placed in the hands of what he called ‘ a rough electorate.’ With growing age, however, he felt himself no longer to be the orator whose speeches had been wont to attract so much attention. As he said, he was afraid of his voice failing through excitement, for he felt most deeply about

this Bill, and in consequence decided to content himself with issuing a protest, to remain on record, as he told me, 'as long as the House of Lords lasts or any trace of its proceedings be preserved.' He sent me this Protest, which, besides being exceedingly dignified, contains several prophecies which have since been thoroughly fulfilled :

AGAINST THE THIRD READING OF THE REFORM BILL,

AUGUST 6, 1867.

DISSENTIENT—

1. Because the Bill, creating in almost every City and Borough in England a new Constituency more numerous than that which exists, impairs, where it does not destroy, the power of the present Electors, and substitutes for it that of a new Body inferior to them in property and education.

2. Because the confidence justly placed in constituencies of approved worth cannot reasonably be transferred to such men, now first entrusted with electoral power ; and it is to be feared that when labour makes laws for capital, poverty for property, Legislation, no longer directed by educated intelligence, will impair the individual freedom of action and the security of possession which have been the foundations of our prosperity and wealth.

3. Because it more nearly concerns the public welfare that Representatives should be well chosen than that Constituencies should be numerous ; and the larger Constituencies have rarely been fortunate in the choice of their Representatives, or persistent in retaining them when they proved worthy of support.

4. Because a Seat in the House of Commons, more difficult in attainment than heretofore, less secure in possession, and not exempt from

humiliation while occupied, will cease to be an object of the same ambition to that high class of gentlemen by whose patriotic spirit and statesman-like wisdom the liberties of the people were secured and the greatness of the country has been achieved.

5. Because the House of Commons, composed of inferior men, dependent upon the fickle feelings of the masses they represent, will not afford to any Ministers a fair and consistent support ; and successive Governments, permanently weak, limited in the choice of men to fill the great offices of State to the few who may have the best hopes of re-election, compelled to feel their way by measures of a tentative character, not fully approved even by themselves, will exist from day to day by concessions, lose all respect for themselves, but not before they have lost that of others, and at length retire with the conviction that the theoretical perfection of Constituencies is incompatible with the successful conduct of the affairs of the country in Parliament.

(Signed) ELLENBOROUGH.

In 1865 the second Duke of Wellington was putting up a monument to his father at Strathfield-saye, but by some unfortunate contretemps the pillar on which the statue of the great Duke was to be placed failed to arrive at the expected time. I sent Lord Ellenborough a description of what had occurred, and in return received the following amusing letter. ‘D.’ is of course Mr. Disraeli, to whom, I may add, Lord Ellenborough liked giving an occasional dig.

‘16, EATON PLACE,
December 14, 1865.

‘MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘I wish you had been in town. I am here for a day to take possession of a house I have taken

for this year. I am greatly amused by your account of the party at Strathfieldsaye. It is unlucky that the chief guest, the Pillar, did not arrive ; but how comes it to be a Pillar ? I thought it was to be a great statue by Marochetti, which, with the pedestal, was to be sixty feet high. I always doubted their being able to get it there ; and I think when the Duke asked you all for this season he must have speculated on a frost or on snow on which it might travel on a sledge.

‘ The dance you describe must have been very classical, like some of those the Romans had at the feasts of Pan and Bacchus, only, as you do not mention it, I suppose the Roman precedent was not fully followed, for the Saltatori were naked. Perhaps D. in his excitement proposed this to Lord Stanhope, who would have entered into a long disquisition, sufficiently historical, upon the dances of the Romans in general and the Lupercalia in particular, ending (after a digression on the character of Mark Antony) with a grave suggestion that it would be better for D. to reconsider the important measure he had proposed.

‘ I am glad you liked Lord Clanwilliam. He was very much with the Castlereaghs in early life, and I knew him at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. He is a clever man and very agreeable, and has always acted nobly. I have not seen him since the death of his wife, which must have been a terrible blow to him.

‘ I hope the death of the K. of B. will keep the Queen out of the House of Lords ; the last time George III. was there he went in an old wig of

George II.'s ; the Queen's supposed intention of going there in her robes and crown would be yet more significant.

‘Yours very sincerely,
‘ELLENBOROUGH.’

As to the political future of the British Empire, Lord Ellenborough entertained the most gloomy forebodings, fearing that with a lowered franchise something like mob rule might result. As he said, ‘We shall see some strange candidates and strange men, perhaps, in the House of Commons,’ which prediction, as a matter of fact, has been entirely verified.

Of the fashionable world, of which he had once been such a brilliant ornament, he saw little in advanced age, being, as he said, entirely out of touch with it, and hearing only its distant murmur. Most of his contemporaries had gone, and, as he used to tell me, he could hardly bear to go into society at all, so sad was it to see those he had once known full of youth and beauty old, wrinkled, and care-worn. The study of Dante was a passion with him, and excellently would he talk of that great poet, much of whose work he knew by heart ; I have the volume of Dante he gave me still. He always retained a keen interest in the affairs of India, and was terribly affected at the time of the Mutiny. The massacre of Cawnpore caused him positive anguish : he could hardly bear to speak of it ; and I have seen him weep at the recollection of that dreadful event ; it was quite piteous to see. A warm supporter of the French during the Franco-German War, he

anticipated great disasters as the result of the German triumph. In October, 1870, he wrote to me from Southam :

‘SOUTHAM,

‘October 14, 1870.

‘MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘At first the war did not give me a standing-place from which to write to you, and even now that events have taken a decided character, it is one so momentous that I hardly know just what I think best put into a sheet of note-paper. The foundations of the great deep are all broken up. There is no longer political gravity to hold States together. No one can calculate their actions; every grasping desire is let loose, and there is nowhere a moral power to hold it in restraint.

‘The Papacy is gone, for it is vain to expect that respect will survive independence. Belgium and Holland will go when France has no longer the power to keep them out of the fangs of the Prussians. Denmark will hardly remain long out of compliment to the ladies of the Danish family. Russia will consider herself to be released from the obligations of treaty when there can no longer be any alliance to protect Turkey.

‘The one thing we want is military strength for our security, and that the poltroonery of the Government will not venture to ask for; it will cost too much! You see I have ended already.

‘Yours very truly,

‘ELLENBOROUGH.’

At Southam Lord Ellenborough had made himself a delightful home, restoring as well an old chapel in

which he took much interest. He wrote to me very frequently whilst the work was proceeding, and sent me photographs as the alterations progressed. The work was finished in 1862, when I received the following letter. It will be observed that towards the end he speaks of his love for war. He used to say to me: 'War and women, these are in reality the only fit interests for a man!' What would he have thought of the puling sentimentalism of the present day?

'SOUTHAM,
November 27, 1862.

'MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

'I was delighted to get a letter from you, for it was a very long time since I had heard of you. I have been in London three times, but only for a day or two each time, on some trifling businesses, except, indeed, once to attend the marriage of a niece, which I must not call a trifling business.

'Here I have only been occupied about a school-house and my chapel. The chapel is a great success. It is always full. I have got a very large harmonium, and a little girl of the clergyman's plays it very well. We have almost a cathedral service. Four more painted glass windows came yesterday, and now, I think, until I can find suitable seats with canopies in old oak for the chancel, I have done all I can within. There is a wall round the enclosure, against which within I have planted all sorts of flowering shrubs, and although there are also some cedars, there will be a predominance of what is gay-looking about the place. The clergyman

leads the singers with a fine full voice, and he generally makes very good sermons, so I am altogether very well pleased, and think I have done a good work.

'I have very lately bought the tythes which must have supported this chapel until the Reformation, and in two years, if I should live so long, I shall be able to leave these tythes for the future perpetual maintenance of the chapel and of the clergyman.

'Within, besides having brasses to the memory of some members of my family, I have put up inscriptions to the memory of the Duke of Wellington and General Sir Charles Napier. There is also a bronze statuette of the Duke on horseback, and a sword and shield taken at Meeanee, Sir Charles Napier's great battle. So much for the chapel.

'As for public matters, of course I have been following every movement in America with the deepest interest, for the thing I love most is war. I have done so all my life. I had rather read a good account of a battle than a novel by Sir Walter Scott.

'In the Italian Parliament, if Ricasoli says of the Garibaldi affair what he has written privately, and shows by facts that G. was *spinto e tradito* by the Rattazzi Government, he will overthrow the Rattazzi Government and convulse all Italy. He will never spare the King, for he is jealous of him, and if there should be a ground for jealousy, as I am inclined to think there is not, still, the K.'s conduct was such as to justify the greatest indignation.

'I will try to be in town on the 9th, but I am not sure that I may not be obliged to go up sooner.

'Yours very truly,
'E.'

Lord Ellenborough did not at all like America or American institutions. I remember a couplet written by himself, which he was fond of quoting :

'Hail, great people ! all whose nobler
Acts proceed from sherry cobler !'

No one, however, could have at that time believed that the United States could have developed into the great Power which it is to-day. As to myself, I never had any dislike for America, which perhaps was because I have always found such visitors from that country as I have met courteous, clever, and altogether most attractive. There used to exist in England a great fear of our institutions becoming Americanized, and Mr. Cobden, a warm admirer of the great Republic, was always supposed to be scheming in this direction. Lord Ellenborough, amongst others, was firmly convinced that such was the case, as will be seen from a letter written at the time of the great Free-Trader's death.

'SOUTHAM DELABERE,
'CHELTENHAM,
'April 29.

'MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

'I am very sorry to find I am not likely to see you very soon in London. I have been detained here a few days longer than I wished by a little gout and a great deal of cold. However, the gout is gone, and the cold would go too if the east wind would.

'Knowing Cobden as you did, you must feel his

death very much. I never saw him. Peel, whatever he may have said of Richard Cobden and his deeds, thought that Bright was the more single-minded man, and had done what he did for the repeal of the corn duty for the sake of the people, not for his own. I confess I think they were both unsuited to the present constitution of this country, and that they had a strange longing for something more on the American model. One would think that that depraved taste must now have passed from all reasonable beings.

I do not think there is any chance of the *dolce far niente* of Eton being disturbed by the Public Schools Bill. It seems to have no friend but its own father, which is a poor provision. However, I think those in authority will have had a thorough fright, and will correct a great deal themselves.

'I wish the Emperor was well back from Algiers. He will find it tryingly hot, and not be able to do any marked good, while he leaves many unquiet spirits at home.

‘Yours very sincerely,
‘ELLENBOROUGH.’

On the occasion of my birthday in 1866, Lord Ellenborough, then seventy-six years old, sent me some lines of poetry.

‘SOUTH DELABERE,
‘CHELTENHAM,
‘April 2, 1866.

‘MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘I had never found out that you had a birthday; but since you resemble the rest of the world in that respect I send you a stanza for it:

'Since Time a change will only make
 Where it improvement can impart,
 It is compelled the course to take
 Of leaving without change your heart.'

'As for politics, unless those who are against the Reform Bill are as active as those who see in it the first step to a Government practically Republican, I am afraid that, notwithstanding the able support given by the best part of the press, they will find themselves beaten in the division.

'Gladstone's speech on the 5th should be answered on the 6th by some of those most capable of doing it. There can surely be no difficulty in finding or in making an opportunity.

* * * *

'Yours very sincerely,
 'ELLENBOROUGH.'

He used often to deplore the fact that old age, like a destroying angel, overwhelmed humanity, and so pitilessly destroyed it both in mind and body. About three years before he died I was most anxious that he should send me his photograph, but he would not consent to have it taken as the old man he then was, preferring, as will be observed, to let me have a copy of his picture painted many years before :

'SOUTHAM DELABERE,
 'CHELTENHAM,
 'October 6, 1868.

'MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

'It is very kind of you to remember me.

'I have a photograph from the picture of me painted for Sir R. Peel in '46. It is much larger than a carte-de-visite, and if you will accept one of

them, I will have copies taken from it. I do not like to be represented only as I am.

'Disraeli's address to his constituents is not a conquering manifesto. Things, however, are going better than might have been expected for him and for the Conservative cause, which alone I care about better than for him.'

'If Lord Stanley were Prime Minister, I think he would have a majority.'

'I envy you your French tour. I am chained to England and, indeed, to my own house for life, because I preserve health through management, but I do preserve it entirely.'

'Yours very sincerely,
(Signed) ELLENBOROUGH.'

The expedition to Abyssinia Lord Ellenborough deemed a great military and political mistake, but he quite despaired of such a view being generally accepted in England by reason of the fact, as he said, that 'almost any war is popular till the time comes for paying for it by taxes,' an observation which might, within recent years, have been made with just as great a measure of truth as in the sixties.

Lord Ellenborough died in 1871, having lived through the great period of political transition and witnessed the transfer of power from one class to another. Handsome even when an old man, he was the type of the English aristocrat of another age, who combined keen appreciation of the world's pleasures and intellectual culture with dignified bearing and exquisite manners :

'Born to command and conscious of his sway,
A courtly noble of another day.'

CHAPTER XI

Visits to Mentmore—Lady Rosebery—Colonel Primrose—Breby—Lady Chesterfield and her daughter, Lady Carnarvon—Lord Glenesk at Cannes—The Empress Eugénie—Some dear friends—Abraham Hayward and his bad French—Two great hostesses, Lady Waldegrave and Lady Molesworth—Charles Dickens.

MR. NEVILL and I went often to Mentmore, then the home of Baron and Baroness Meyer de Rothschild, and here it was that I first saw Lady Rosebery, then quite a child. None of those who knew her can ever forget that kindly solicitude for others which was one of many admirable characteristics. The parties at Mentmore were of a very agreeable kind, some of the most distinguished men of the day generally coming down for them, Lord Beaconsfield and his wife being constant visitors. The last time I went there was shortly before poor Lady Rosebery's death, but she and Lord Rosebery did not have the large parties as in her father's time.

From the productions of Lord Rosebery's pen I have always derived the greatest enjoyment—cleverness runs in that family.

One of the most delightful men I ever met was his brother, Colonel Primrose, who was military attaché at Vienna, with a brilliant future before him

when, most unfortunately, death came upon him in Egypt, whither he had gone to take part in the Egyptian War.

Of quite exceptional ability, he used to write letters which it was a treat to receive, so much so that I always said: 'I really prefer Colonel Primrose to be away from England, for when he is at home his time is so much taken up that little is seen of him, whereas when he is abroad one gets his letters.' Unfortunately, I have lost most of those he sent me, but the following, written from Vienna, gives an idea of his easy and cultivated style:

'1, LOBKOWITZ PLATZ,
VIENNA,
March 6, 1881.

'A card inviting me to appear before the Council of the Institute of Art, of which you appear as chief inquisitor, brought your reproachful name before me, dear Lady Dorothy, only the other day, and made me begin to think it was high time I invaded your peaceful home with what force and display this dull town can muster, and wrote you another letter, though, God knows, I have nothing of interest to tell you, and the only satisfaction you can gain from reading these lines is the conviction of the abiding impression your memory makes on me. Thank Heaven, the ball season is over and the Viennese are presumably at their prayers and lettuces, though in reality Lent throws but a very flimsy garment over their pleasures. We have been, however, danced into satiety. Masked balls, fools' balls, beggars' balls, washerwomen's hops, cab-

drivers' shuffles, artists' orgies—everybody has been capering, from high to low; perhaps more among the low than the high, for the Court mourning cut short much festivity. . . . We are rapidly being snowed up here. For the last three days the weather has been more wintry than January, and even this municipality has given up cleaning the streets. It is a sad business in South Africa. One loses so many friends. One of the pleasantest fellows I ever knew, Captain Maude, is, I see, included among the last list. I do trust Evelyn Wood will do something.

'Sincerely yours,
E. PRIMROSE.'

The last time I met Colonel Primrose was at Bretby, Lady Chesterfield's place. We were a very small party, the only other visitor being Colonel Forester, known as 'the lad.' I remember our playing whist, and my execrable performances at that game; indeed, I played so badly, and proved so fatal a partner to whoever I cut with, that I eventually declined to be anything but a looker-on. Colonel Primrose and I went several excursions together during that visit; little did I think it was the last time I was to see him, full of life and vivacity as he then was.

Lady Chesterfield, our hostess on that occasion, had an experience which I believe never occurred to any other Englishwoman. As Miss Anne Forester, before her marriage to Lord Chesterfield in 1830, Mr. Stanley, afterwards fourteenth Earl of Derby, had proposed to her, and after her husband's death

in 1866 it is said that Lord Beaconsfield, not once only, but several times, laid his heart at her feet ; thus she had rejected two Prime Ministers of England. I rather believe that, had it not been for her daughter Evelyn, Lady Carnarvon, the mistress of Bretby would have accepted Lord Beaconsfield. At any rate, I know that Lady Carnarvon entertained the strongest possible objections to the idea of any such match. She, poor thing ! died in 1875. Her daughter, Lady Burghclerc, a woman of great literary gifts and quite exceptional cleverness, is (as were her mother and grandmother) a delightful and much-valued friend of mine.

Lady Chesterfield was essentially a great lady of the old school, retaining to the end of her life the erect figure and elastic gait for which she was distinguished. At one time she had lived much in the racing world, and for many years no ladies were better known or more popular at Newmarket than Lady Chesterfield and her sister, Mrs. Anson. It was the latter who said to Lord George Bentinck at the first Spring Meeting in 1848, when he rode up to her carriage, looking ill and careworn : ‘ For Heaven’s sake, George, let me persuade you to cut politics and come back to the turf, or you will be dead in six months !’

I felt the death of poor Lady Carnarvon very much, for I was very fond of her, and used to spend a good deal of time at Highclere. She was a woman of excellent judgment, and the influence which she exercised over her husband in political matters was invariably good, and this he thoroughly appreciated. I remember Lord Ellenborough saying to me once

when Lord Carnarvon had made a particularly brilliant speech : 'She did it ! she did it !' and I suspect he was right.

Lady Carnarvon possessed a great faculty for collecting together people of conspicuous talent. Frequent guests at Highclere were Sir Stafford and Lady Northcote, Dean Stanley, Lord Derby, Sir Alexander Cockburn, Lord Beaconsfield, and many other clever people. Well do I remember Lord Beaconsfield walking with some of us in front of the house, suddenly coming to a halt, and in impressive tones ejaculating : 'How scenical ! how scenical !' by which, I suppose, he meant that it reminded him of a scene in a play.

Lady Carnarvon's death may truly be said to have been a most deplorable loss to the Conservative party in general, as well as to her personal friends, for, as I have said, she possessed great influence, which was always most judiciously and wisely exercised.

Other friends of mine were the late Lady Glenesk, who died in 1898, and her husband, whom I have known for so many years, and who has been so bitterly tried by the untimely death of his clever son at an age when a brilliant future seemed to be in store for him. For several years before this lamentable event I went and stayed at Lord Glenesk's lovely villa at Cannes, where his sister and he dispensed a charming hospitality, rendered doubly delightful by the contrast between the brilliant sunshine and the leaden skies which one knew were tinging England with gloom. The beauties of the garden my pen is much too feeble

to describe; I can only say that the eye was satiated with the wealth of colour which radiated from the clusters of flowers which in that beneficent climate flourish in luxuriant and even riotous profusion. During my visit the Empress Eugénie came over from her villa at Cap Martin. She seemed strong and alert, whilst keenly alive to everything going on around her, insisting on one occasion even on exploring every cranny of the house. A splendid *grande dame* she was, accompanied by her devoted secretary, Monsieur Pietri, a staunch Bonapartist like his father, the famous Prefect of Police, who, after seeing his mistress in the zenith of her beauty and power at the Court of the Tuileries, has since the terrible downfall of 1870 lived but to be her trusted counsellor and friend.

I did not, of course, mention to the Empress that I had known her husband in the days when he was but a pretender to the imperial crown, but the sight of this august lady on whom the hand of Providence had been so heavily laid brought vividly into my mind all the tremendous events which had happened since I had as a girl laughed in a London ballroom with Prince Louis Napoleon.

For some years I went regularly to Homburg, having been first attracted there by that kindest of women, Lady Haliburton, and her distinguished husband, who is a son of Judge Haliburton, celebrated as 'Sam Slick.' It is, now, however, a long time since I visited that health resort, and many of the pleasant people I used to meet there are dead. Alas! of late years one by one my old friends have been passing away.

The death of Prince and Princess Edward of Saxe-Weimar was a sad blow to me, for the latter especially I was in the habit of constantly seeing. When Prince Edward was Military Secretary in Ireland I went over to stay with them in Dublin, and well recall to mind the celebrated Miss Gonne (the daughter of an English Colonel of Lancers, who, for some reason or other, chose to identify herself with the Irish Nationalist movement), being asked to dinner. She arrived in a dress in which green had evidently been purposely selected as a predominant colour, and after the dinner was over insisted upon giving a rendering of 'The Wearing of the Green,' a song which at such a function was essentially out of place, and calculated to effect no good, except demonstrating the extreme bad taste and lack of any sense of fitness possessed by the singer. I may add that she was not asked again.

Frances, Lady Waldegrave, a woman possessed of great presence of mind, once came through a very trying and public ordeal in Dublin with flying colours. This was after the appointment of Mr. Chichester Fortescue (later known as Lord Carlingford), her fourth husband, as Irish Secretary, on the occasion of her first appearance at a 'bespeak night' in the Dublin Theatre. The 'bespeak night,' it is well known, corresponds in local importance (and, as a genuine Dublin citizen would add, 'in the eyes of the world') to a gala opera night in London, with the conspicuous addition of some license being either sanctioned or simply assumed by the gods in the gallery of interpellation on topics of the day to officials in authority or other members of rank and

fashion. In fulfilment of this time-established custom, no sooner was the fair Countess seated in her box than she was hailed from the celestial regions by a shout to this effect: 'And would ye kindly be afther informing us, ma'am, which of your four husbands did ye like the best?' Without a quiver or a moment's hesitation, Lady Waldegrave turned her face straight towards the clamourers and announced in clear tones: 'The Irishman, of course,' thereby evoking an echoing chorus of applause not only *to* but *from* the skies.

Her appreciation of the marriage state, indeed, differed very much from that of Mr. Alfred Montgomery, who, on more than one occasion, was heard to declare that, in his estimation, to marry was to enter Inferno.

Lady Waldegrave was one of the great hostesses of London society, and entertained very largely at Strawberry Hill, besides giving dinners at her house in London. A constant guest at these banquets was Mr. Abraham Hayward, Q.C., of *Quarterly Review* fame. He was a small man of somewhat peculiar countenance, with an extraordinary laugh. Possessed of considerable powers of satire, towards the end of his life he was inclined to exercise too little restraint in his criticisms, which sometimes outran the limits of good taste.

Mr. Hayward's political convictions were Liberal, and the small services he had rendered as a Palmerstonian satellite procured him the run of a good many social circles, of which he was for some years a fairly entertaining member. His ways and customs, however, instead of improving, gradually deteriorated

by society's toleration, and he grew addicted to rather aggressive noisiness, more especially after a copious dinner, such as his soul (to particularize no physical organ) greatly loved. One of his most irritating habits was a trick of constant misquotation in French, believing himself to be a master of the language, and remaining sublimely unconscious of the errors into which he blundered. On one occasion, for instance, for some reason of his own, anxious to impress his hearers with a sense of his personal importance, he sought to do so through the medium of the accepted French saying, 'Je ne suis pas la rose, mais j'ai vécu près d'elle.' Unfortunately, however, he stumbled upon the word 'avec' instead of 'près,' without suspicion of the solecism he had committed and the entirely changed meaning of the phrase, and was, in consequence, summarily annihilated by the sarcasm, 'Well, if you *have*, it isn't manners to say so.'

In the sixties and early seventies Lady Waldegrave and Lady Molesworth, who, although friends, were also in a way rivals, rather sought to eclipse each other in the way of social entertainment. I do not mean by vulgar ostentation or display, but by gathering together the most pleasant and clever people possible with a view to the success of their parties and dinners. Though no hard-and-fast line was drawn, Lady Molesworth was essentially a Conservative hostess, whilst at Lady Waldegrave's the largest proportion of the guests were generally Liberals. Lady Waldegrave was, undoubtedly, by far the cleverer woman of the two; nevertheless, her rival scored an easy triumph in her dinner-parties,

which somehow or other were always completely successful and a delight to all the guests. Lady Molesworth, indeed, although by no means brilliantly intellectual herself, possessed a mysterious power of drawing out clever people and making them talk—a social quality of the highest possible value. I must add that she took great pains in the selection of her guests, making sure that they should be people certain to get on well together. She used to give two different kinds of dinner-parties, some large, of from fifteen to twenty people, mostly drawn from the fashionable world, and others small, at which some six or eight of the best brains in London could exchange ideas.

Bishop Wilberforce, Dr. Quin (a celebrated wit of that day), Lord Houghton, and Sir Edwin Landseer, were amongst the many clever men whom one met constantly at her entertainments. I remember an occasion on which Lady Waldegrave, being anxious to have Charles Dickens as one of her guests, had persuaded Mr. Bernal Osborne to bring the great novelist to dine, the latter's aversion to fashionable society having with difficulty been overcome. A number of very fashionable people were present, and all agog as to how amusing Dickens would be, as is the wont of many of their kind who imagine clever men are going to turn intellectual somersaults in consideration of being dragged into a society which is quite incapable of either understanding or appreciating their genius. In due course Mr. Bernal Osborne and his captive arrived, and we all sat down; but things did not turn out as expected, for the author of '*Pickwick*' merely uttered a few common-

place remarks and nothing more. Mr. Bernal Osborne said to me afterwards : 'I feared this ; once he imagines he is being trotted out, he won't say a word !'

A short time afterwards Lady Molesworth asked me to dine to meet the same great writer ; we were to be but six—our hostess, Mr. Dickens, Lord Torrington, a great musical critic, another literary man, and myself. That evening was one of the most agreeable I have ever known ; Dickens simply bubbled over with fun and conversation, talking in a way which resembled nothing so much as some of the best passages in his own books. He laughed and chaffed, telling me, I remember, that he had a great scheme for writing a cookery-book, and I believe the poor man really meant it, but, alas ! his death, which occurred very shortly after, prevented the realization of the idea.

The way in which Lady Molesworth managed to get anyone of exceptional brilliancy or interest, no matter of what rank or nationality, to come to her parties was quite wonderful. Samuel Wilberforce, the witty Bishop of Oxford, once said to me : 'I believe if the King of the Cannibal Islands were to come to England, within twenty-four hours he would be dining with Lady Molesworth'—a prediction which did not seem to me at all exaggerated.

I often used to go and stay at Pencarrow, Lady Molesworth's place in Cornwall, where pleasant people were always to be found. On one occasion I recollect the Duc and Duchesse d'Aumale were to be of the house party, and all of us were at the station to meet them, when, just before their train

arrived, our hostess gave what was almost a scream of dismay. ‘Good gracious!’ said she, ‘to think I should have forgotten that.’ ‘That,’ on inquiry, proved to be a fire-screen formed out of a cavalry standard on which, in prominent letters, was emblazoned ‘Waterloo,’ a battle at which the regiment it had once guided to victory had played a very prominent part. The glorious relic, it appeared, had always stood in the room now set aside for the royal visitors who were about to arrive; however, she was equal to the occasion, for one of the carriages was told to gallop back with orders enjoining the immediate concealment of the defiant banner.

In connection with this I may mention, as showing the immense tact and kindness of feeling possessed by our present Sovereign, Edward VII., that, when the French municipal councillors were being shown over Windsor Castle, special orders were given that the flags annually presented by the Dukes of Marlborough and Wellington, in remembrance of the victories of Blenheim and Waterloo, should be placed out of sight during the visitors’ progress through the state apartments, and, in addition to this, the Waterloo Gallery for that day only was specially designated by a name which could recall no painful memories to the descendants of the vanquished brave. The Frenchmen were fully aware of the delicate solicitude which had been shown for their feelings, and were much touched and pleased at the graceful consideration of their royal host.

CHAPTER XII

Mr. Disraeli's opinion of Lord Mayo—Lord Dufferin—A lifelong friend—His delightful letters—Sends me an account of the assassination and funeral of Alexander II.—My dear friend Lady Airlie.

IN 1872 a great sensation was caused by the assassination of Lord Mayo in the Andaman Islands. He was at the time Governor-General of India, an appointment which had aroused some criticism. I remember Mr. Disraeli (as Lord Beaconsfield was then) coming one day to pay me a visit and saying, 'People appear to be rather surprised that I should have appointed Mayo as Governor-General, declaring that up to the present he has given no particular sign of conspicuous ability. Well, let them wait and see ; within a year I will wager that Lord Mayo will have become immensely popular, and the appointment be acclaimed as one of the best I ever made' —which prophecy was exactly verified. Lord Mayo was very kind to me, sending from India photographs illustrating his life there, which I still preserve.

Another of England's great Proconsuls, Lord Dufferin, was also a constant correspondent of mine, and I used to receive most charming letters from him when he was in Canada and Russia. I had known him as a child in Dorsetshire, and our friend-

ship lasted all through his life. One of his principal characteristics was his great charm of manner and old-world courtesy ; agreeable and fascinating, he imported, as it were, an atmosphere of sincere and reverential respect into any conversation in which he might be taking part. He was a very good correspondent, and wrote me many interesting letters when Governor-General of Canada.

Whilst taking the warmest interest in the Dominion and its affairs, the stirring events of its past history in no way left him unmoved, and during his tenure of office he did his best to preserve such memorials of other days as were still extant. In 1876 he effectually put a stop to the threatened demolition of the old fortifications of Quebec, which at that time appeared very imminent, a parcel of donkeys, as he said, having taken into their heads to 'square up' the picturesque old town after the approved American fashion of quadrangular blocks and streets distinguished by numerals.

He wrote me many interesting letters from Canada, describing any phases of life in that country which he deemed to be of interest. In one of these is an account of a murder of a very dramatic kind :

'Now to try and make you some return for your pleasant letters, of which I have had two in one week ; but it is like trying to make bricks without straw. The best thing I can do is to tell you another murder story which has come under my notice.'

'A Frenchman and his wife were travelling in the North-West—that is, over the desert prairie—with

a servant of the name of MacIvor, who was not, however, a Highlander, but a Gallic "half-breed"—*i.e.*, half French and half Indian. On their way they were joined by another traveller in his prairie cart, an Englishman, who proposed to accompany them part of their journey. The French couple and their servant usually slept in the same tent, but one night MacIvor said that he thought he would sleep beside the other man, who generally made up a bed for himself beneath his cart at a little distance. His master had not been asleep for more than an hour or two when he was awoke by MacIvor coming to the tent-door and asking him to come out and catch a bullock which he said had strayed; but on poking his head out, he saw the bullock quietly grazing a hundred yards or so off, and replied that he was not dressed and could not take the trouble, and that MacIvor must go and catch him himself. After this MacIvor returned to the tent-door, and said that he was cold, and would like to lie down in his old sleeping-place; but in another hour the Frenchman was wakened by the discharge of a pistol, and on opening his eyes he found MacIvor kneeling beside him with a smoking pistol in his hand, and felt that the ball had grazed his face. He leaped up, and a struggle ensued, which ended in the Frenchman loosening himself from his would-be murderer's grasp and rushing out into the open air with MacIvor after him, discharging the other balls of his revolver. The Frenchman took refuge behind his cart, MacIvor following him round and round, and when he found he could not catch him discharging shots at him through the spokes of the wheels! This lasted some

time, until all the barrels were exhausted, when MacIvor disappeared into the darkness. In the meantime the Frenchman's wife had come out, and as soon as she understood what was going on, fainted, her husband telling her for God's sake to keep her presence of mind, for that MacIvor would be back as soon as he had reloaded his arms. This prophecy proved true, for again MacIvor appeared upon the scene, and the chase round the cart and the firing through the spokes of the wheels recommenced.

'Can you conceive such a scene amid the stillness and the darkness of the illimitable prairie? At last, finding that he could not bring his man down, MacIvor seems to have got terrified, and proposed that they should go together and look for the other man, who was supposed to be sleeping at a little distance. The Frenchman having agreed to this, they proceeded together, but when they came to the spot they found the unfortunate man dead under his blanket, having been already shot by MacIvor. On their way back to the tent the Frenchman contrived to get hold of MacIvor's pistol, but he soon became so weak from loss of blood that he had to beseech the assassin to go in search of assistance, which he promised to do if his victim would consent to say nothing about what had happened, which, of course, he promised. There seems to have been an Indian encampment not far off, to which MacIvor went, and when they arrived they found the wretched Frenchman senseless from loss of blood, and his wife, as you may imagine, in a most pitiable condition. The end of it all was that MacIvor was arrested and sent to Winnipeg for trial, where he

was convicted and hanged. You may well believe that I saw no sufficient reason to interfere with the due course of justice in the case. The brute's object was to murder the husband and possess himself of his master's goods, and probably of his wife, whom I dare say he would have afterwards got rid of, and come back into the settlements with some story of their having been murdered by Indians. There is a fine piece of melodrama for you in return for all your pleasant gossip, which, remember, you have agreed to deal out to me from time to time.'

Later on, when Ambassador at St. Petersburg, he sent me an account of his impressions at the time of the assassination of Alexander II. Lord Dufferin, it will be observed, had left the Czar but a short time before the murder took place.

'ST. PETERSBURG,
'*March 27, 1881.*

'DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

'You should not reproach me for not having written to you, for I was the last who wrote, and it is you who owe me a letter; but in these matters I am very generous and forgiving, and in accordance with your request I send you the only illustrated paper published here which gives pictures of the late catastrophe. It is all very sad. Fortunately, on the Sunday the dreadful event happened I had gone to the parade, and thus had an opportunity of speaking to the Emperor and having a last shake of the hand from him. I had come home, and was sitting reading the newspaper when I heard a loud

explosion, and it at once flashed across my mind what had happened. Soon after they came running in to tell me that the Emperor had been wounded by a bomb thrown underneath his carriage. I at once hurried off to the palace, and was told by one of the Grand Dukes that there was no hope, and half an hour afterwards all was over. You will have seen full particulars in the English papers of how the thing occurred.

' An evening or two afterwards I attended the transportation of the body from the chamber where it had been laid out and embalmed to the chapel. It was a most melancholy scene. The whole palace was lit up as if for a gala festival, and the people present formed themselves into two rows, between which at a given signal the procession moved. The crowd was so enormous that I had great difficulty in making my way to the chapel, and I was almost crushed to death. In the midst of it I found myself wedged up against a young, rather pretty, and very plump lady with her back towards me. She was pressed against me, and I was pressed against her, for we were both equally powerless. Suddenly she was seized with a fit of nervous impatience, to which she gave vent by using her behind as a battering-ram, with which she made the most desperate plunges. If she had not been rather soft I should have been brayed as in a mortar.

' The ceremony of the removal of the body from the palace to the cathedral in the fortress took place on Saturday week. As the procession had to make a long round of about four miles, I was able both to see it and to attend the service in the church.

Though there was a high wind, the sun was shining, and the sight would have been very striking if only the individuals and groups, of which the procession was composed, had struggled less and comported themselves with a little more attention to effect. But octogenarian Generals carrying crowns and Orders upon cushions, and decrepit old priests over ninety, can hardly be expected to walk four miles through streets deep in slush without falling into disarray.

‘In great haste,
‘Ever yours,
‘D.’

The last time Lord Dufferin came to see me was just before going to Ireland, where he died; his visit, as he said, was in order to bid me good-bye. He looked somewhat worn and ill, but never for a moment did I think that it was to prove my last sight of this delightful man, and I was much affected by his death, for our friendship had been a long and sincere one.

Lord Dufferin was a great admirer of my dear friend, the Dowager Lady Airlie, a perfect woman, nobly planned. After a visit to Cortachie in 1875 he wrote to me: ‘Lady Airlie is always charming, but never more perfectly so than in her own house—so kind and cordial, the very ideal of a *dame châtelaine*.’ Since that time many and great sorrows have saddened her life, but, happily, she still remains the stately and serene figure, mindful of others’, even the meanest’s, good, that I ever remember her to have been.

Would that there were many more such women ! Alas ! to formulate such a wish is to speak of the impossible, for Nature but rarely moulds such a nature, in which knowledge, intelligence, and charity are so excellently blended and combined.

CHAPTER XIII

The second Duke of Wellington—His originality and wit—Some anecdotes—His hatred of cant—His likeness to and reverence for his father—Guests at Strathfieldsaye—Mr. Motley—Irving—Dissimilarity in character between the Iron Duke and his son—Funeral of the former—The Duke's opinion of Mr. Chamberlain—His eccentricities and love of writing little poems—Copenhagen's epitaph—The Duke's good nature and unostentatious charity.

ANOTHER dear friend of mine was the second Duke of Wellington, of whom I have already spoken as possessing very great mental capacity, which, alas ! he never troubled to put to any particular use. Brilliant, witty, and of a most original turn of mind, I look back upon the 'old Duke,' as we used to call him, with feelings of affectionate remembrance. A man who rather shrank from mixing with the outside world, to his friends he was a most delightful companion, retaining his love of fun to the very end of his life. Well do I remember his successful attempts, one wet Sunday in the country when staying with me, to convince a sternly religious sister-in-law of mine of the innocence—nay, the positive necessity—of whist. It was a difficult task, for she attached a somewhat exaggerated importance to the outward ordinances of religion.

She was a woman of most kindly nature, but her idolization of the clergy amounted almost to a failing ; she seemed, indeed, to know as if by instinct when any of ‘the cloth’ were in the vicinity, whilst a church to her was like a public-house to a drunken man—she simply could not pass it. On the occasion of which I speak she was in an especially pious mood. We were but four, and her co-operation was absolutely indispensable, but as it was Sunday, I hardly dared to propose cards, even though our stakes were nil ! However, the old Duke, after a brief consultation, declared his intention of arranging matters. ‘Mrs. Walpole,’ he said, in that peculiar voice which, man of peace as he was, yet distinctly savoured of the battlefield—‘Mrs. Walpole, a word with you alone.’ A word with her he had, and though I do not know exactly what passed, our game of whist took place. She afterwards told me that the Duke, in spite of his apparent frivolity, was one of the most saintly men alive, and held religious views practically identical with her own. I believe that he had conclusively proved to her that, had the Apostles been in a country house on a wet day with a partially blind and aged invalid (himself), and had they known the game of whist, they would have deemed it a mortal sin not to play.

The Duke was a most whimsical and amusing man. I remember once telling him that I did not feel at all well ; the fact was I had been having rather a dull time, but there was nothing particular the matter with me. He inquired what the symptoms might be, and as I could only allege a vague feeling of malaise, said : ‘Ah, I know what you

want—some mixed pills. They are wonderful!' I begged him to tell me exactly what this remedy was, and where I could get it. 'The easiest thing in the world,' he replied; 'it is the idea of a friend of mine. Whenever he comes across pills the composition of which he does not know, he puts one or two into a special box, which he labels "Mixed Pills," and these he prescribes for his friends whenever they are ailing—that is, "bored." They never fail; sometimes, indeed, their effects are extraordinary.'

I dare say a good many people who fancy themselves ill would be all the better for an occasional dose of 'mixed pills.'

Full of queer expressions, he could be very emphatic when anything upset his household arrangements. On one occasion, everything having gone wrong in connection with a party which he was giving, he sent me an account of the catastrophe, from which the following is an extract. I believe he made a tremendous rumpus.

'My footmen have struck for more beer on finding that I want them for my party. I called them tailors out on strike, and turned them out of the house. Don't take any tall footmen for the next ten years, for fear of getting one of them.'

His letters were as a rule terse and witty. After an agreeable dinner at Mrs. Disraeli's, he wrote me:

'DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

'A most pleasant dinner last night at Mrs. D.'s. She said: "You see, I have asked all your·

favourite ladies to meet you." I answered : " Yes, and annul the favour by asking the Duchess to spoil the sport."

' Yours,
W.'

The Duke hated cant of every sort, and had a particular aversion for those of a Methodistical turn of mind, whom he used to laughingly call 'Snivellers.' Here is an account of his dealings with one who, however, I must in justice add was in reality a very worthy man, which the Duke would himself admit :

' DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

' It is charming to see your writing. I am now going to "ma petite maison" to shoot partridges, and go to Strathfieldsaye for the beginning of October. I guess what the ravens' beaks want ; it is my money, lost at nap. Dizzy had many bad harvests, and it is as well that Gladstone should have a taste of it now that the franchise is so low. The people he cares for will suffer this year, for the price of bread will rise.

' Her Grace is at Tunbridge Wells, and I doubt not will rejoice at your visit. I have returned to earth, satisfied that "Snivellers" know nothing about it.

' By-the-by, I must tell you about my Sniveller. He called on me to blow me up for ordering carrying corn on Sunday as a work of necessity. I said : " But the Archbishop's prayer failed in effect." He answered : " Quite the contrary ; our prayers were instantly answered, and we have ever since had

beautiful weather." I shall not call him hereafter "Sniveller," but "Pious Fraud." I told him that he was thought to be a Primitive Methodist (whose meetings he had attended), and I told him of a speech of Archbishop Whately's in the House of Lords: "A man may hold any opinions with honour, but I don't like to see a man holding the opinions of one Church with the revenues of another." Pretty severe, I think.'

The parties at Strathfieldsaye used to be most pleasant, for the old Duke delighted in getting together interesting people. My great friend, Lady Chesterfield, was a frequent visitor, as was the late Mr. Newton (in appearance the image of Corinthian Tom as pictured in Pierce Egan's book). General Hamley and Mr. Escott were also often there, whilst the Rev. Mr. Gleig, who, before entering the Church, had carried the colours of his regiment at Waterloo, was also constantly coming over to dine. Others were the late Lord Lytton, Lord Wolseley, Mr. Fleming (known as the 'flea'), and Mr. Arnold, owner of the Lyceum Theatre, a man of great culture, who wrote a 'History of the Sublime Society of Beefsteaks' (the original Beefsteak Club), about which he had much that was interesting to say.

In appearance the Duke much resembled his father—the likeness was very striking when he stood under the picture which hung over the mantelpiece in the drawing-room, a constant way of his. He was much interested in clever people, and there was generally some one of brilliant intellect amongst his guests—a man like Mr. Motley, the celebrated his-

torian, for instance, in connection with whom an odd incident recurs to my mind.

In former days the United States were not known in England as the great Power which they have now become, and as an exemplification of this, I must describe what occurred during one of Mr. Motley's visits. He was at that time American Minister to the Court of St. James's. Having come down rather early before dinner one evening, I found myself in the midst of an animated group, all giving their views as to the precedence which should be accorded to the distinguished visitor. 'Well, Lady Dorothy,' said the old Duke, 'what do you say? I maintain that he ought to go in merely as an ordinary guest.' 'Then, Duke,' said I, 'you want war with America, for without doubt Mr. Motley, as diplomatic representative of that great Republic, must be sent into dinner first of all, otherwise you will be offending, not only him, but his country as well.' The Duchess at once agreed that there was a good deal in what I said, and, receiving other support as well, it was finally decided, not without some demur on the part of the Duke, who murmured something about 'brand-new countries and new-fangled nonsense,' that Mr. Motley should go in first, which he accordingly did, as was only right. I merely mention this to show in what way some of the people of the old school looked upon the land of Washington, not being able to divest themselves of the idea that it was a sort of distant colony of no particular importance. I may add that the Duke desired nothing less than to put a slight upon Mr. Motley, for whom

he entertained feelings of the greatest admiration.

The subject of precedence at dinner-parties reminds me of a custom which formerly prevailed at dinner-parties in the country, but which, I should say, is now obsolete. The last time I observed it was at a dinner given by one of the greatest Victorian men of science, Professor Huxley. Noticing that our host led the way into the dining-room with quite a young, and to me unknown, lady on his arm, I inquired the reason, and was told ‘that is the bride of the year—a young lady who has but recently been married;’ and then I remembered that I had seen the same thing done before at country houses in old days. I thought it a pretty custom, but was amused to discover such a survival in the very centre, as it were, of modern thought.

There was always plenty to do at Strathfieldsaye. I used especially to enjoy pottering about with the old Duke, who had generally some new experiment on hand. For the men there was excellent fishing, or, if the weather should be very bad, tennis in the court, which stood within a stone’s-throw of the house. Besides this, a great many interesting places were in the vicinity, furnishing agreeable objects for drives and excursions.

Elizabeth, Duchess of Wellington, a typical *grande dame*, was always an admirable hostess at Strathfieldsaye. Exceedingly handsome, she reminded one somewhat of a stately picture. She was passionately devoted to music, and played very charmingly upon that sweet old-world instrument, the harp. Occasionally concerts were given at Strathfieldsaye,

which were really very good indeed ; these used to please the old Duke, for, though I do not believe that he himself cared very much for music, he liked the bustle and life consequent upon the giving of these entertainments, for which he always had a house party. Sir Henry, then Mr. Irving, came down for a few days on the occasion of one of these festivals ; the Duke particularly liked him, being always attracted to talent of every sort. I remember being amused at the great actor's departure, as, indeed, we all were, including the departing guest himself, who understood his host's ways very well. The carriage had been at the door for two or three minutes, whilst Mr. Irving was lingering over lunch, when at last he said to the Duke : ‘ Well, I suppose I ought to be off now, though there is still plenty of time.’

To which the answer was : ‘ Mr. Irving, the day is hot—the horses not yours—you had better go.’

Strathfieldsaye is specially remarkable on account of its magnificent trees, the soil appearing to be very suited to their growth. In the gardens are many splendid Araucarias, which were originally raised from seed sent to the great Duke by my uncle, John Walpole, about seventy years ago Consul-General at Valparaiso. Lord Rivers, the original owner of the estate, took care that it should be well wooded, and I believe the abundance of fine trees was one of the principal reasons which caused the Duke of Wellington to select it in preference to Up Park and Bramshill, both of which places he inspected with a view to purchase before deciding to settle at Strathfieldsaye.

Whilst on the subject of trees, I must speak of a special kind of wood which I discovered and made use of. In the woods about my Hampshire home I observed that the fallen branches of trees would, in decay, assume a particular shade of green, and, thinking that this kind of wood might be placed to some ornamental use, I had a quantity of it collected, which was eventually made into several very pretty things, such as letter-cases, blotting-books, cabinets, as well as two mantelpieces. The green wood was, of course, merely an outer coating carefully smoothed and polished, but the effect produced was excellent, and the things made of it have stoutly resisted the effects of time, remaining absolutely unchanged. I am astonished that no one else has ever utilized this decayed wood for making furniture, which would be most pretty and ornamental. The old Duke was much interested in my experiments, and declared he had similar wood on his estate, but his discovery came to nothing. I do not believe his vegetable malachite proved of the right sort; anyhow he never, as far as I remember, had anything made of it.

The kind of wood which assumes in decay a particular shade of green, pleasant and attractive to the eye, is that of the oak-tree, the broken branches of which, falling amongst dead leaves and twigs, become infected with a parasitical growth, 'the rust fungus,' the effects of which are well known to botanists. I believe that some small use is made of this green wood at Tunbridge Wells, but, as I have before said, to the best of my knowledge I am alone in having caused things such as mantel-

pieces to be made out of it. Articles of this wood mounted in silver present a most pretty and delicate appearance, the pale shade of the green being admirably set off by the brightness of the metallic decoration.

The Duke, though, as I have said, very like his father in appearance, was very dissimilar to him in character ; indeed, in this respect no two men could have been more unlike. I believe that the Iron Duke treated his son in very stern manner,* and, in consequence, there was never much sympathy between the two ; but after the great soldier's death his memory became almost a cult with his son.

I have met the great Duke, and remember being introduced to him, and thinking how terribly bent he looked. In November, 1852, I went to see his funeral procession, paying three guineas for a seat at Alabaster's, a straw-bonnet shop in Piccadilly. We were instructed to be in our places at a very early hour (five o'clock) in the morning. I got to my seat about six, and had to sit there for several hours, as the procession, as far as I recollect, only passed between eleven and twelve. Its progress was much delayed by the tremendously heavy funeral-car proving too great a weight for the horses which drew it. The car wheels sank into the ground and produced a rut, from which they were drawn only with the greatest difficulty. The whole thing was most depressing, for, in addition to the gloom in-

* The second Duke, when with his regiment at Dover, was once the only officer not asked to dine by his father, who, some comments being made upon the omission, said : 'Lord Douro unlike his brother officers, has failed to leave his card.'

separable from such an occasion, the long waiting had rendered everyone thoroughly miserable.

Long years afterwards the third Duke received an intimation from the authorities of St. Paul's Cathedral to say that the pall and other accessories used at the great Duke's funeral were in their keeping, but had fallen into such a dreadful state of decay that they would be glad to know what should be done with them. At his desire the whole paraphernalia was sent to Apsley House, and there he asked me to go and see it. The pall was an enormous one, and when laid out covered the whole floor of the hall. The Duke told me to choose anything I might like as a souvenir, and I accordingly took four little flags or, rather, guidons, eight of which, each a yard long—the Union Jack on one side, the Wellington arms on the other—had decorated the funeral-car. Of these four little flags, two I gave away to friends of mine, one to a great soldier, Lord Wolseley, and the other to a most clever and discriminating collector of all sorts of historical relics. The remaining flags are still in my possession, and are much valued by me as the colours under which the Iron Duke set out on his last march.

Amongst the trappings and accessories sent by the authorities of St. Paul's were a large number of pikes and spontoons. These the third Duke had thoroughly cleaned and put in order afterwards, arranging them in stands in the hall at Strathfield-saye. Some doubt existed as to the exact history of these weapons, but I cannot help thinking that they were the ones formerly borne by the lance-sergeants

and corporals of the regiments which had taken part in Wellington's campaigns. At the time of the funeral the army had long abandoned such things, and my idea is that they had been once more rescued from obscurity for the purpose of being for a last time carried in the cortège accompanying the great captain to his grave.

The old Duke had a great reverence for the memory of his father, and preserved Strathfieldsaye exactly as it had been in his time. Though not objecting to the smell of tobacco when away from home, he would have no smoking-room in the house, as there had never been one; after the ladies had gone to bed the men, should they wish to smoke, adjourned to the housekeeper's room downstairs. Everything was in just the same condition as it had been left by the victor of Waterloo.

Though never a prominent figure in political life, he took a keen interest in all that was going on. He used to write me on half-sheets of paper any scraps of news he might hear; we had made a mutual compact to utilize our half-sheets in this manner. In May, 1881, he wrote: 'I have just heard that the Boers on Majuba Hill fancied that Gladstone was there! No such fool he!' On another slip of paper he sent me a criticism of the 'Greville Memoirs': 'Winchelsea says of Greville's book, "It is as if Judas Iscariot wrote the private lives of the Apostles."

In politics the Duke was a strong Conservative, but, nevertheless, he was in no way narrow-minded in his opinions, and could appreciate ability, even in those opposed to him in opinion. The following,

written in August, 1882, is a somewhat remarkable forecast of what actually did happen :

‘STRATHFIELDSAYE,
August 3, 1882.

‘DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

“The devil is not as black as he is painted,” and somewhere it is written that it is well to make friends with “unrighteousness”; therefore I shall have pleasure in meeting Chamberlain; besides, I think him a sensible man, and sensible men go on reasoning and reforming opinions all their lives. Not so bigots, of which I am not one.

‘Yours faithfully,
‘W.’

Welcoming innovation when it really meant progress, he had no sympathy with foolish attempts to delay the inevitable, and the opposition to the Co-operative Stores met with his disapproval.

‘STRATHFIELDSAYE,
January, 1880.

‘DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘I dare say you saw that the tradesmen had an interview with Chamberlain, complaining of the Co-operative Stores.

‘At the same moment a deputation of donkeys waited on Gladstone, complaining of the co-operation of farmers, who, by growing corn, interfered with their prescriptive right to an abundance of thistles. I have not seen public notice of the latter interview, but as Gladstone has been selected by

the donkeys, it must be because they expect fellow-feeling from him, after all that has lately occurred.

‘ Yours faithfully,
‘ W.’

Although fond of writing in a humorous strain, he could be serious enough when he chose, and could show a considerable grasp of any subject to which he devoted himself. On the question of tenant right he held very strong views, which he once expressed to me as follows :

‘ DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘ I don’t like “party polemics.” I doubt not that Lord Salisbury has given a good party cry among the ignorant Irish, but what is that for those who seek for mere justice ?

‘ The whole question of tenant right is a beautiful Irish mystery—what I call “the sublime principle of injustice.” There ought to be no tenant right, for tenant right means what the rent might, but does not, exact.

‘ How, then, can any man pretend that his rent is too high, and yet at the same time demand tenant right ? Originally, tenant right was granted as a kind of bribe when tenants were scarce and wanted. Now they are numerous and too many.

‘ However, I am old and Mr. Chamberlain is young, and political cries are valuable in party politics.

‘ I will look after the Blue-Book, but Mr. Chamberlain can serve you in that respect better than I.

'I have had a "dachshund" returned on my hands. Do you want one?

'Yours faithfully,
'W.'

In dress the Duke was eccentric to a degree, wearing as a rule an old soft felt hat and an aged cloak of the sort once known as a 'roquelaure,' a huge cape of black cloth, and this, combined with his goggles, made him a figure of a very noticeable and eccentric kind.

He kept a flock of cashmere goats at Strathfieldsaye, and had their hair made into stuff for coats and cloaks; this he would give to his friends, but I must confess that the coat I had made of it was so stiff that it really could not be worn—one might as well have put on a coat of stout cardboard.

Being much interested in animals, he once insisted on driving me down to the Crystal Palace, where a donkey show was being held. On our arrival there nothing would prevent him from walking on the especial piece of ground marked out 'For Judges Only.' At first I accompanied him in this illegal perambulation, but, seeing a good deal of whispering and flutter amongst the officials, I told him that we really had no right to be there, and had better withdraw before we were ordered off. The old Duke, however, would not listen to me, saying it was all nonsense, and that for his own part he should remain where he was; if I was afraid, I had better leave him and see what would happen, and accordingly I abandoned the sacred spot, amidst his bitter taunts of cowardice.

He continued to stroll about as before, when presently an official approached him and said : 'Sir, may I ask, are you a judge?' 'A judge of what?' thundered the Duke. 'Of donkeys,' came the reply. 'Certainly I am, and' (looking hard at the man) 'a very good one too; leave me alone.' Very much abashed, the man slunk back to his fellows, and another consultation ensued. Eventually someone recognised the identity of the eccentric stranger, who, indeed, presented a figure, once seen, difficult to forget, and the committee of management sent to him to say that they would esteem it an honour if he would consent to act as one of the judges. To this he willingly assented, and, having now obtained a legal right to perambulate the reserved space, he came to me and told of the complete success of his tactics, about which he was hugely delighted.

I shall never forget an excursion I once made with him from my little place in Sussex, where he was staying for a few days. A bee show was taking place some two or three miles away, and the Duke, who was very much interested in hives at that time, was most anxious to go when he heard of it. I had brought no horses or carriages down, so what was to be done, no flys being obtainable in that district at that time? He fussed about and declared that he would find a conveyance if I would leave it to him, which I did. Eventually a farm cart was discovered, and in that he insisted on going, seated on a chair, with me on another, and the driver sitting far back on a plank, with the reins between us. I don't suppose such a queer-looking party had ever been seen in those Sussex lanes before, or ever will

be again. We created something of a sensation on arriving at the show, but the Duke was perfectly delighted, and vowed the cart was as good a conveyance as any carriage. As a matter of fact, I believe the villagers took him for old Bobbles, a local centenarian labourer, in whose history I had been much interested.

He was very fond of warm rooms, and used always to grumble at me on account of the small size of my grates. Coming to lunch one day, he had no sooner entered the room than, casting a glance at the fire (which I must confess was not a very bright one), he turned to the footman who had announced him and said, ‘Bring me my coat.’ The venerable covering in question having been brought, he at once put it on and retained it during the whole of lunch-time. No efforts could induce him to remove it. He said: ‘I will shame you into having good fires.’ He afterwards sent me the following epigram which he had composed :

‘The Tripod and the Muffinette,
In days of foregone sires,
In shining brass a goodly set
Surrounded blazing fires.
At Lady D——’s ’tis not the same,
But there is cause why not—
Upon her hearth there’s ne’er a flame
To keep her muffins hot.’

Copenhagen, the charger ridden by the Iron Duke at Waterloo, lies buried at Strathfieldsaye. This gallant horse saved the great captain from capture on that eventful day, successfully clearing a ditch lined by the 92nd Gordon Highlanders, some French

cavalry being in pursuit. The 'old Duke,' wishing to place an epitaph over this faithful servant's grave, sent me the two following to choose from. The first :

'Here, full of honour and great memories,
Wellington's war-horse Copenhagen lies.
Spare empty praise to one so tried and true,
These words suffice : "Peace—Victory—Waterloo!"'

The second :

'God's humble instrument, though coarser clay,
Should have his meed on that heroic day.'

I chose the first of the two, which at that time seemed to me the most suitable, but I am not sure that my choice was a right one. In any case, the Duke wrote me back that he considered me 'no judge of epitaphs,' and that he had definitely decided upon the second of the two, written by himself in preference to the one composed for him by the Rev. Mr. Haweis. He had carefully avoided giving me any clue as to the authorship of both when he had sent them ; as I afterwards told him, I was not to be blamed for expressing an unbiassed opinion, to which he had to agree.

He eventually altered the epitaph (greatly for the better) before erecting the memorial, on which the following inscription may now be read :

'Here lies
COPENHAGEN,
The charger ridden by the Duke of Wellington
The entire day at the Battle of Waterloo.
Born 1808. Died 1836.
God's humbler instrument, though meaner clay,
Should share the glory of that glorious day.'

The Duke was fond of writing little poetical compositions, such as an epitaph written on a pet dog of mine which had once eaten his spectacle-case. An unusually indigestible meal had caused its death, a slipper and a couple of pamphlets having overtaxed its gastric energies.

Often he would send me scraps of verse. The following couplet from Anacreon was written at the age of seventy-four :

‘ “To love” is one of human ills,
And not to love is tedious pain ;
But Fate the bitterest cup distils
For him who loves, and loves in vain.’

STRATHFIELDSAYE,

January 1, 1881.

The same year he wrote, as a suggested inscription for the Women’s Hospital, some lines which I think are worthy of being preserved :

FOR THE WOMEN’S HOSPITAL.

‘ In puling infancy a mother’s care
The ills of childhood knew, to sooth or share;
In teeming youth a maiden’s charms we prize,
And learn affection by a lover’s eyes ;
In careworn manhood ’tis the faithful wife
That smooths the pillow till the close of life.
These, then, are Woman’s claims. Shall we deny
The debt of manhood, youth and infancy ?
Shall we the kindly memory exclude,
Or pay the tribute due to gratitude ?’

June 7, 1881.

As an epigram on some old smugglers’ tongs, on a scrap of paper :

EPIGRAM.

'These tongs recall the pipe, the bowl,
 The fun, the grim disorder
 Of smugglers safe from law's control
 Beside the chimney corner.'

Underneath was written :

'The rhyming is not correct, but, then, the subject is illiterate.'

'Two mottoes for sundials :

'I stir with morn, and work all day,
 Nor cease but with the light ;
 If Man would practise what I say
 He'd not be poor at night.'

' "Lose not an hour" is the theme
 Of doctors' sermons, poets' dream !
 For hours lost are lost for aye.
 How fast time runs I best can say.'

On one occasion I received a letter from him written in a whimsical strain. It was supposed to be despatched from Limbo, a euphemistic name for what is always said to be a very torrid place of abode :

'LIMBO, POSTE RESTANTE,
'August 23, 1881.

'DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

'You see why I have not written to you sooner, for this place is a long way off. The truth is, I am dead, and I am, with others, waiting for the last Trump. As you have not yet had experience of this place, you will not be sorry to have a slight description of it. Though the space is unlimited, yet it is sufficiently crowded, and if there is not a gaol delivery soon on the end of the world, as my Sniveller prophesied, we shall know the situation of Hyde Park Corner, and need devils as police.'

‘ Nevertheless, there reigns complete quiet, for our bodies are immaterial, and we have neither the power of hearing nor speaking. Yet we communicate freely by the same kind of electricity as the electrical eel, but only at three or four yards’ distance. There is, of course, good and bad company all huddled together, but the bad cannot communicate their thoughts if we keep at a proper distance.

‘ I observe around me a peculiar expression of care on every countenance. This is easily to be accounted for. No one is certain of the principle on which he will be judged—no more so than in a trial by jury. Those who have been considered, and who considered themselves, most pious, are conscious of spiritual pride, etc. Glorious soldiers are conscious of having been afraid, and of having deceived the world, etc. But more anxious still are ladies and clergymen, for they always thought of what the world required.

‘ Of course, there are “Dare Devils” among us, but among them the most dejected are those who denied any future state; in vain they communicate by electricity that there is nothing beyond Limbo, but they are reminded of their former mistake.

‘ I wish Mallock were here, for I doubt not that he would describe what he saw with effect.

‘ Yours faithfully in the flesh,
‘ W.’

‘ N.B.—Dizzy and I renewed acquaintance. He is prepared to talk down his judge, and prove that if he had not done what he did worse would have occurred; but perhaps he won’t be allowed to defend himself or to speak at all. He seems only anxious

lest Gladstone should witness against him, or be employed by the Devil to judge him.'

He was, as I have said, always full of fun, and would put my son, then at Eton, up to all sorts of jokes, over which he would chuckle. The old Duke was very kind to him, and some of his holidays were always passed at Strathfieldsaye. He was, a most kindly old man, concealing beneath a somewhat gruff manner a most sensitive and generous nature. I think that for me he would have done anything in his power, and he did, as a matter of fact, on several occasions exert his influence at my request, always assenting to my wishes in some peculiarly original manner. For instance, a distant relative of mine, living in Hampshire, was, I understood, very desirous of being made a magistrate; I accordingly wrote to the Duke, at that time Lord-Lieutenant, pointing out the qualifications of my would-be administrator of justice, and begging him to help in the matter. At first the chances of my obtaining what I wished did not seem promising, for this was the answer I received :

'STRATHFIELDSAYE,

'December 7, 1881.

'DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

'Your protégé should write his wish to myself. I never do jobs, but I nominate the very best men I can get. I intend sending you lots of game; but not even *you* can corrupt me.'

'Pray let me have Mallock's address.

'Yours faithfully,

'W.'

However, in the end all came right, for my candidate, having himself stated his claims to the Duke, was duly appointed, as a brief but satisfactory note informed me :

‘ DEAR LADY D.,

‘ The job is done ; God forgive me !

‘ Yours,

‘ W.’

He was much interested in my experiments in silk-worm culture, and, having given him some, kept me constantly informed as to how they were doing. At first all went well, and, as the Duke put it, he was delighted to ‘ faire part ’ of the birth of a litter of our children ! Great care was taken of the cocoons, but, alas for human hopes ! for some extraordinary reason all the moths which emerged were of the fair sex. I received the news of this disaster in a characteristic note :

‘ STRATHFIELDSAYE,

‘ October 22, 1867.

‘ DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘ My love is most unlucky if it is silk-worm love, for I have a fourth moth come out, and a *female*. No Gabriel. I fear we are doomed to virginity.’

The Duke would at times be very happy in his quotations. I remember his saying of a lady who, at an entertainment given at her house, devoted the whole of her energies to looking after the arrangements and generally supervising everything, whilst talking very little to the men : ‘ She was charm-

ing, but I felt inclined to apply to her the reproof directed against Burke : " You lavished on a party what was meant for mankind."

I shall never forget the many, many enjoyable visits I have made to Strathfieldsaye, for the old Duke, in his quaint way, was the most pleasant host possible ; it was a house where one was made to feel thoroughly at home, and there existed an old-world sense of solid comfort totally devoid of ostentation. Though outwardly giving the impression of rather pooh-poohing generosity and feigning to assume a somewhat cynical attitude towards the world in general, he was at heart the most kindly and charitable of men. I once had a maid to whom I gave notice, as I thought, from her behaviour, that she had been drinking. She indeed admitted having seemed to behave in an odd manner, but declared that it was nothing but the effects of a cigarette in which she had foolishly indulged. Not at all inclined to believe this story, I still maintained that she must leave ; but knowing that the old Duke was expected to lunch on a certain day, she made a dash at him on his entry and besought his good offices on her behalf, making such an impression upon him that I received the following appeal :

' DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

' Your maid opened the door for me in a dreadful state of tears, because you have sent her away. She declares she was not drunk, and that smoking once had made you suspect her. Drunkenness is an unpardonable offence in certain depart-

ments of *men*—for instance, grooms, for the horses are the sufferers—but I should doubt if you are correct in accusing a nervous woman. I should be, to all appearance, drunk if I smoked; but, as the effect is unusual, one should not be blamed for the first time. I don't think she drinks, and I really recommend you to retain an attached maid. It is not as if it were your butler or footman.

‘Yours faithfully,

‘WELLINGTON.’

I did forgive the culprit, but, needless to say, it was not very long before the same thing occurred again, and in such a flagrant form that no allegations of smoking could be put forward as an excuse. I had to send her away, and I believe for long afterwards she continued to write to the Duke, whom she eventually thoroughly disgusted by her constant appeals.

A large part of his time was taken up in dealing with the enormous mass of begging letters which he perpetually received. Of this he never spoke, but I have very good reason to believe that hardly anyone who applied to him was refused financial relief. His private charity was unbounded, and largely reduced his by no means enormous income, for he could not bear to refuse a request for assistance, even though it might contain evidences of being the work of a professional impostor. As I have said, he never breathed a word of all this to a soul, but I know for certain that what I say was the case. Let it be written that, if the victor of Waterloo had a will of iron, his son had a heart of gold.

CHAPTER XIV

My friendship with Mr. Cobden—An ultra-Conservative lady declines to meet him—A cock-fighting Cobden thought more of locally than the great Free Trader—Cobden's distrust of Lord Palmerston—His death—My first meeting with Mr. Chamberlain—Pleasant visits to Highbury—My admiration for his wife—Mr. Chamberlain as a letter-writer a delight to his friends—His strong sense of humour—His intellect more comprehensive than Cobden's—Sir William Harcourt as a conversationalist and wit—His son's devotion.

RICHARD COBDEN, whose name has now again in recent years come prominently to the front in connection with the question of tariff reform, was a dear friend of mine. Living close to us in Sussex, we used to see a great deal of him, unlike the majority of our neighbours, most of whom disliked and hated his political views, which they considered dangerous to their own prosperity.

He was, indeed, practically boycotted by the local gentry. Personally, I have never been carried away by political prejudice, having found most agreeable friends amongst people of very diverse opinions, from Socialists to old-fashioned Tories. To me, in spite of his politics, Mr. Cobden seemed an interesting and agreeable man, and so we became great friends.

At that time Sussex was ultra-Conservative. Some

there were, for instance, who would absolutely refuse to let their houses to anyone suspected of the taint of Radicalism, doubtless fearing contamination.

I remember Mr. Cobden telling me of his wish to see a certain country house, well known for the art treasures it contained—Up Park, then belonging to Lady Featherstonhaugh, widow of Sir Henry Featherstonhaugh, who had been a great friend of George IV. I knew her well, and accordingly wrote asking leave to bring a party over, which was to include the prophet of Free Trade. I received a nice letter in reply, saying that we should certainly be shown everything of any interest, but a postscript added that the owner herself must beg to be excused from entertaining or seeing us, as under no possible circumstances could she consent to meet a man of such destructive and revolutionary opinions as Mr. Cobden.

Behaviour of this kind on the part of the county magnates may have been narrow-minded and absurd, but, in view of the ruin which his policy undoubtedly brought upon the squires, it now seems as if they felt much the same presentiment of coming trouble as does the rabbit when confronted by a boa constrictor.

Personally, he was a most courteous and agreeable man, sincere and honest in his political opinions. Of old yeoman stock, he inherited all its sturdy independence ; and if the squires hated him, he in turn was most contemptuous of their mental abilities, considering that such power as they possessed was not used for the best interests of the country, and looking forward to the day when it should be

wrenched from their hands. His views on this subject are expressed in the following letter written to a correspondent in November, 1847 :

‘ DEAR SIR,

‘ I am obliged by your favour. These Protectionist incurables must be left to flounder on and cover themselves with ridicule. If ever the question be seriously revived of putting another tax on corn, it will assume a very different character to what these simpletons expect ; it will be the Parliamentary representation that they shall be called on to discuss, and they will have the same men who repealed the corn law demanding such a reform of the House of Commons as will for ever depose the squires from their present authority, and place them in a position more suited to their abilities. Perhaps the best thing they could do for us is to follow their present course, and I am, dear sir,

‘ Yours truly,

‘ R. COBDEN.’

Whilst the local gentry of West Sussex looked upon Mr. Cobden with considerable suspicion and distrust, the labourers and rustics generally did not know anything very much about him or his political propaganda. There was a story of an ardent worshipper at the shrine of Free Trade coming down to Sussex with a view to having an interview with the great Radical. He lost his way, and was obliged to interrogate a passing yokel as to whether he knew Mr. Cobden, and where he lived ? ‘ Muster

Cobden ?' said the man ; ' to be sure, we all knows him ! He keeps the public-house at Ha'naker, and rare sport he do have there at times.'

Thinking this description somewhat out of character with the great Free Trader's reputed views, the visitor made further inquiry, and discovered that the rare sport indulged in by ' Muster ' Cobden was cock-fighting, his devotion to which had but recently necessitated an unpleasant and unremunerative interview with the local bench. This ' Muster ' Cobden, indeed, unlike his political namesake, enjoyed great local popularity ; about the other Cobden the rustic said he knew little and cared less.

His house at Dunford Mr. Cobden built on the site of the old farm cottage he had lived in as a boy ; he paid for it out of the £70,000 presented to him as a public testimonial.

A most good-tempered man, Mr. Cobden used to work under what to anyone else would have been very disturbing surroundings, writing his letters in the drawing-room of his house whilst his children romped about and constantly interrupted his labours by their shouting and laughter, which, however, never seemed to disturb him at all. He was much attached to his son, and I do not believe ever recovered from the shock of his death, which occurred quite unexpectedly. When that sad event took place he wrote me the following very pathetic letter, from which it will be seen that, no hint of his son's illness having reached him, the terrible blow was rendered doubly severe :

' 38, GROSVENOR STREET,
‘ 1856.

‘ MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY NEVILL,

‘ Do not think me insensible to the kindness which prompted you, in the midst of your own anxieties, to think of us in our dreadful sorrows. We have indeed been plunged into unhappiness. May God spare you, my dear friend, the affliction with which He has been pleased to visit us. Our affectionate boy was at a school at Weinheim, selected for me by Chevalier Bunsen, who resides at Heidelberg, fourteen miles distant. Up to the last all the accounts, both of his progress in his studies and of his physical health, were most satisfactory. Indeed, the very last report, dated a fortnight before his death, described him as the foremost boy in the sports of the playground, and as exciting the admiration of his playmates by his activity, strength, and courage. It was under these circumstances that he was snatched suddenly from us for ever by an attack of scarlet fever. Dreadful as would be such a bereavement under any circumstances, it was rendered still more distressing by its suddenness and the absence of all warning or time for preparation. Owing to a misunderstanding between the master of the school and Chevalier Bunsen, no telegraphic message was sent, and I heard nothing till I heard all. The poor boy was in his grave before we heard of his illness. This has added greatly to my poor wife’s sufferings. She has hardly up to this moment been able to realize to her mind the dreadful fact. She cannot picture him to herself as anything but full of vitality, such

as he always was in her sight. Time, much time, will be necessary to draw a veil over her memory and dim the recollection of the past. I tell all her kind friends to forget her for a while, and leave her till God in His own good time shall have restored her to a state of resignation and peace. She came up with me to my lodgings here last Monday, at my urgent wish, but she pleads to return, and we shall go back to-morrow. She has seen none of her friends, and although there is no perceptible improvement, I hope she will benefit by the change. Your kind heart will induce you to bear with me through this long and sorrowful note. With kind regards to Mr. Nevill,

‘Believe me, very sincerely yours,
‘R. C.’

Lord Palmerston was Mr. Cobden's political *bête noire*; he did not consider him a sincere politician, and would comically complain: ‘Whatever I may say of the old gentleman, he will still persist in calling me his honourable friend.’

In 1859 I received the following letter from Mr. Cobden, in which he expresses his opinion as that corn will not immediately rise in price! There is also a significant reference to the Lancashire manufacturers.

‘MANCHESTER,
‘September 17, 1859.

‘MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY NEVILL,

‘It is very pleasant not to be forgotten by one's neighbours, but I regard it as a special honour

to be missed by you. Your kind note did not reach me till several days after it was written, otherwise it should have been answered earlier. My wife and I have been visiting many of our old friends in this vicinity. The change has been of benefit to her, and it has enabled me to look after some private affairs which ought to have been attended to long ago. I have some property here which has been a trouble to me, owing to its having been neglected. I suppose all politicians neglect their own affairs, but I don't think they are justified in doing so, for, in my opinion, duty, as well as charity, begins at home. So I must be a money-grubbing old hunk for the rest of my days, but I assure you I have no intention of turning my back on Dunford, and I hope to be there again next midsummer; indeed, I should not die happy if I did not expect to be buried under the shadow of my favourite South Downs. In the meantime I think we have been fortunate in our tenant, Colonel H., who seems to be a quiet, gentlemanly man, precise and conscientious in small matters, and with a disposition to keep men and things in order. This is exactly the character one would seek for in a tenant of a furnished house. The only danger is that he may probably keep the establishment up to a higher standard than I shall be able to maintain, and when I come back my gardener may not like to be deposed from the command of another man or two to be his own digger. In the course of a week or so my wife and I shall leave this part for the South. She will stay a few days with our friend, Mr. Ashburner, at Brighton, whilst I pay a visit to Dunford, to take a peep at my farm and arrange

with Mr. Lunn for the purchase of some sheep. Tell Mr. Nevill I shall, on feeding them, try the cotton-seed-cake. Whilst at Dunford I shall prefer to take a bed at the cottage at my farm, where my papers, etc., are deposited, and where I have a comfortable room. Afterwards my wife and I shall proceed to Paris, to stay with our children during the winter. I expect to be obliged to pay one visit to England before the House meets.

'I hope Mr. Nevill is bearing the low price of wheat with fortitude. I can now sympathize with him, being myself one of the agricultural interest. I don't expect corn to be much higher for the next six months. In the meantime the manufacturers in Lancashire are exceedingly prosperous. Profits are good and wages are rising, and everyone is content, and consequently no one cares about politics.

'I hope you are not pleased with this wretched China war. It is lucky for me that I am not in the Cabinet, to be made responsible for the crimes and follies of our own representatives in that region. Why could not Mr. Bruce have gone to Pekin, as Lord Macartney and Lord Amherst did, without attempting to force his way at the head of a fleet of ships of war? *We should not allow a foreign Minister to come up the Thames in that fashion.* When shall we show the heathen world that we are really Christians by doing to them as we would be done by? Pray remember me kindly to Mr. Nevill.

'Believe me,

'Yours very sincerely,

'R. C.'

Though not good-looking, there was something extremely attractive in his countenance which, when he became interested, would light up and almost fascinate one on account of the vivacity and strength of intellect which became clearly displayed.

I made him give me his photograph, which I still have ; it was taken in Paris.

' 69, CHAMPS ÉLYSÉES,
‘ PARIS,

‘ June 14, 1860.

‘ MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘ You did me the honour to ask me for my photograph. Though I have not followed your advice by sitting to Disderi, I think I have found an equally competent operator. Indeed, I am told that he is even now considered superior to the famous artist of the Boulevard des Italiens. But of this I must leave you to judge. I have been detained here longer than I had contemplated when I first reached Paris, but not longer than is necessary for completing the work in hand. I am unable to say within a few weeks when I shall be able to return to England. My wife thinks of returning to England shortly with the children, who are very anxious to exchange Paris for Dunford. The weather has been very bad here almost ever since I arrived last October. The sun has been very rarely visible, and rain has fallen with very few exceptions, I was going to say daily. To-day it is as bad as ever. It seems as if we are going to have a fall of water to compensate for the long dry season of late years. It brings to mind the old doggerel :

‘ No man more surely pays a debt
Than rain pays fair, and fair pays wet.’

I hope it suits your sandy slope at Dangstein, and that Mr. Nevill is not complaining of his farming prospects. But I fear we are not likely to have a good harvest. It is very certain to be late, and that is always unfavourable for the Northern Counties, where a part of the crops never ripens in late seasons. However, let us indulge the hope that the sun may speedily shine upon us. Remember me kindly to Mr. Nevill, and I remain,

‘Yours sincerely,
R. COBDEN.

‘ You must not trouble yourself to answer this, as I shall look forward to the pleasure of seeing you in Sussex. My wife begs her kind regards.’

Mr. Cobden was always anxious I should hear him speak in the House of Commons, and I frequently went. I remember his grand speech on China about the ‘Lorcha.’ He was a most accomplished and easy speaker, always seeming to find exactly the right word at the right time. His voice, though powerful, was not strident or loud—at least, it did not appear so—though when he spoke every sentence could be distinctly heard; there was, indeed, an ease and complete absence of strain about his speaking which rendered it most agreeable to the hearer. An orator of the calibre of Bright or Gladstone he certainly was not, but his speeches, devoid of flowery phrases or spirited declamation, had, nevertheless, a certain convincing power of their own which, I think, more than made up for their lack of studied effect. He was a constant and con-

vinced advocate of peace, and often has he talked to me of the miseries of war, being also very averse to our acquiring new possessions, which he used to tell me would prove our destruction. Time after time he would say : ' We shall be ruined by our foreign possessions.' Much interested in my gardening and love of rare plants, it was through his efforts that I obtained the eggs of the Chinese silk-worm *Attacus cynthia* (the Cynthia moth), the caterpillar of which feeds on the *Ailanthus glandulosa*, or tree of heaven.

I felt Mr. Cobden's death very much ; never strong in the lungs, his death was caused by a chill which he caught one bitter March day, on which he had gone to London to make a political speech.

He is buried in a peaceful Sussex churchyard near the South Downs, beneath whose kindly shade he had, like his forebears, the brave old Sussex yeomen, desired to rest.

Years after Mr. Cobden's death I was to know another great politician, who, convinced that Free Trade had not proved the success which had been anticipated, has within recent years directed his energies towards the reform of a policy which he declares unduly favours the foreigner to the detriment of English industry and commerce. It is many years ago now since I first met Mr. Chamberlain at a dinner-party given by Lady Jeune (now Lady St. Helier). We at once found a common bond of interest in the subject of orchids, of which I formerly had a collection, and soon became great friends. Bright and amusing, in spite of his great political cares, Mr. Chamberlain is, I consider, a really

delightful as well as a most clever man. When first I knew him, many of my old friends were quite alarmed lest I should become wildly revolutionary or something of that sort, for all sorts of absurd rumours used to be circulated as to the fierce communism of the rising politician. And what absurd rumours they were! One lady, whose Conservative principles were of the most uncompromising kind—Lady Chesterfield, a Tory of the Tories—was in the habit of sending me a turkey from time to time. I happened to be expecting one from her a few months after I had made the acquaintance of Mr. Chamberlain, but to my surprise no turkey arrived, and eventually I wrote to make inquiries, fearing it had been mislaid; this was not, however, the case, for in reply I received a letter saying: ‘I hear you have had Mr. Chamberlain to lunch; I therefore cannot send you a turkey to feed such a democrat, and I am angry at your seeing him so much.’ My answer was brief: ‘You are wrong; Sir Stafford Northcote has been my only political guest of late, and I promise, if you send me the turkey, nothing but a Conservative tooth shall touch it.’ The turkey came.

At the present day Mr. Chamberlain is the great champion of the class who formerly dreaded and feared him; however, I do not think that it is he, but rather the times and circumstances, which have altered.

A great student of French literature, Mr. Chamberlain has absorbed something of the lightness of its style. On one occasion, when a certain Conservative politician was making speeches which

were really ultra-democratic in tone, he amused me very much by comparing him to the Irishman, whose sedan-chair, having lost its bottom, exclaimed, ‘But for the honour I had as lief walk.’ ‘Your friend,’ he said, ‘will perhaps find out that but for the honour he might as well be a Radical.’

Another very happy criticism of his was the one he passed upon a certain Government which he compared to ‘Mr. Pickwick’s cab-horse,’ which the cabman said was kept in the cab ‘on account of his weakness.’ ‘We reins him in werry tight, and takes him in werry short, so as he can’t werry well fall down.’

He is indeed gifted with a very strong sense of humour, which makes him a most delightful friend, always having some quaint anecdote or amusing story to illustrate and enliven the expression of his ideas. Whilst on the subject of electioneering tactics and expedients, and discussing the various manœuvres—some of them not too scrupulous—which political parties of all shades of opinion employed, he once remarked: ‘Perhaps with the progress of civilization a substitute for the present cumbrous and after all uncertain methods may be found; in Spain I am told they have already discovered it, if an anecdote I heard the other day is true. My informant had been travelling in that country with the governor of a province who was going to preside at an election. He had with him in his carriage his ballot-boxes and a large black bag, and on the way he explained at length the system of voting which was in vogue. “But,” said my friend, “what about the bag?” “Oh!” said the Governor, “the bag is the majority.”’

I have paid many most pleasant visits to Highbury, where the garden and hot-houses are a delight. The host's knowledge of botany renders a walk round there instructive as well as pleasant, for there is not much about orchids which is unknown to him. As for Mrs. Chamberlain, I have hardly words in which to express my admiration—a woman in a thousand, and one who is, above all, thoroughly feminine, not clouding one's appreciation of a cultured and clever intellect by advocacy of any fad or theory likely to cause a sensation—a true woman. When Mr. Chamberlain married Miss Endicott, he wrote that he was delighted to tell me that he was about to fly in the face of one of two prejudices which I said I entertained with reference to America, for he wrote: ' You once told me that there were two things about that country which you could not stand—"its girls and its tinned lobster"; however, I am going to marry one of the former, and I hope you will have reason to modify the first part of your creed.' And I may add that almost immediately after meeting Mrs. Chamberlain I did.

While assisting her husband in every possible manner, and constantly attending political meetings with him, Mrs. Chamberlain is the very opposite of the so-called advanced woman who dabbles in politics; indeed, I feel sure that her husband would never have countenanced anything of that kind. With reference to the question of woman's suffrage, and the ultimate possibility of female members of Parliament, he once said to me: ' Thank goodness there are none! Of the two evils, I prefer Parnellites to petticoats.'

Mr. Chamberlain, as is well known, does not devote any particular attention to taking exercise ; indeed, he never troubles about it at all. The story goes that once, whilst on a visit to the United States, he was taken somewhat unwell, and, in consequence, consulted a doctor, who, questioning him as to his habits and mode of life, became somewhat horrified on being told of his patient's exploits in the way of cigars. ‘ Mr. Chamberlain,’ said he, ‘ I think, if I may say so, that you smoke a great deal too much.’ ‘ Perhaps I do,’ was the imperturbable reply, ‘ but, then, you must remember I don't take any exercise’—an original view of the case which completely dumfounded the physician !

Mr. Chamberlain is an excellent correspondent, and it is always a pleasure to receive one of his letters, which, crisp and sparkling, have but one fault—their brevity. His handwriting, curiously enough, resembles that of another clever man, Sir Roderick Murchison, a great friend of mine in long past days.

This faculty for pleasant correspondence is, in the case of Mr. Chamberlain, doubly valuable to his friends, for he is naturally unable to spare much time for visits and calls.

When not occupied with political cares, he is essentially a man whose life is passed in his home. For clubs he cares not at all, as he once told me ‘ the bores that infest them spoil his temper’; much does he prefer his own fireside, which is in no way surprising, for his family is a particularly united one, and the many intellectual interests which appeal to its members render life at Highbury an educational as well as a social delight.

I often think it odd that I should have been on terms of friendship with the two politicians whose views have excited such widespread and deep-seated controversy—Cobden and Chamberlain. The former, though a man of commanding intellect, cared nothing for culture ; his was a somewhat rugged nature, and I do not know that he would have left such a great name in any other field of energy than politics. Mr. Chamberlain, on the other hand, must, I think, have shone conspicuously in any career he might have chosen to adopt, for, in addition to enormous application, he possesses powers of adaptability and suasion which would always make him a leader, no matter the sphere of life into which his lot might be cast.

Sir William Harcourt was fond of meeting Mr. Cobden, and consequently often came down to stay with us in the country. During these visits he would lay aside all political preoccupation and become the delightful conversationalist which he knew so well how to be. I used, I recollect, to infuriate him by my mistakes—false quantities and the like—in the Latin names of plants. He would often say that, in his belief, I made them on purpose, but, being a fine classical scholar, he would never allow an error of this kind to go uncorrected. I don't think Sir William took my love of botany and science very seriously, having written to me once :

‘ Pray don’t exhaust your brain with reviews ; they will make you stupid, and demoralize you. Nature has done much better for you than art is likely to accomplish.’

One of the most brilliant parodies ever made by

Sir William was probably the one on the late Lord (previously Sir Rainald) Knightley, who was a staunch pillar of his own political party during the greater portion of the last century and a typical representative of the genuine old Tory class. At the same time he was much given to criticism—often carried to the verge of contumely—of his leader, Disraeli, in private life, though in the Senate an unflinching straight voter on all occasions.

Sir Rainald's well-known little weakness of rather unrestrained pride in his long pedigree made him sometimes the object of good-humoured chaff among his many friends, and at a large dinner once prompted Sir William Harcourt to the long-remembered and witty parody :

‘ And Knightley to the list’ning Earth
Relates the story of his Birth.’

The last thing I heard about this great Liberal leader was told me by my cousin, who, having asked him how he liked his son's marriage, received the reply : ‘ I have but one objection—that I could not marry the bride myself.’

Sir William was idolized by his clever son, Mr. Lewis Harcourt, who, indeed, may be said to have sacrificed everything during his father's lifetime in order to be constantly at his side, displaying a filial devotion which in these days is but very rarely to be found.

CHAPTER XV

First meeting with Mr. Disraeli—His inclination to silence in general society and contempt for frivolity—Politics the one end and object of his existence—His conviction that he was personally unpopular—Indifference to riches—His sister, Miss Disraeli—His opinions of his opponents—Interest in great families and veneration for the romance of the past—Vivacity of Mrs. Disraeli—Some letters—Mr. Gladstone and the primrose—His pathetic note to me—Lord Beaconsfield's pessimistic views as to the future—His appearance in latter years—His death.

It was at a party, given for very young people, that I first met Mr. Disraeli, gorgeously dressed, a resplendent dandy as he was at that time. Chancing to be standing not far away, I heard him say : ‘Pray who is that young lady who looks as if she had come out of a picture of George II.’s time ?’ He was told and at once came up to me, saying : ‘ You are dear Walpole’s sister, and I must know you.’ Thus began an intimacy which lasted to the end of his life. To me he was always not only the great politician, but the delightful friend.

Already intimate with my brother, Lord Walpole, he soon became a frequent visitor at our house, and as, after my marriage, we chanced to be close neighbours, both living in Upper Grosvenor Street, I saw a great deal of ‘Dizzy,’ as he used to be called. He

would often present me with souvenirs of his elections, knowing my love of such trifles, for, like my kinsman Horace Walpole, I am fond of collecting.

A note from Lord Beaconsfield, then Mr. Disraeli, which I highly prize, is one hastily scribbled on a half-sheet of paper, just after his election for the county of Bucks. In it is an allusion to the chair in which it was at that time the custom to hoist a successful candidate. It runs :

‘ AYLESBURY.

‘ MY DEAREST DOROTHY,

‘ I write you this as I get out of the chair to tell you I am returned Knight of the Shire for the County of Bucks, after a terrible row.

‘ My wife sends her love, and I also.

‘ Yours,

‘ D.’

To his intimate friends ‘ Dizzy’ was both charming and interesting, but in society, unless something chanced to arouse his interest, somewhat inclined to silence, taking but little part in the general conversation. I think at heart he had a profound contempt for frivolity. There were occasions, indeed, when he would hardly utter a word, and would assume an air which instinctively caused people not to attempt to rouse him from what appeared almost a lethargy. His mind, I fancy, was always running upon politics, which were the one end and object of his existence.

Very apt to be depressed by political matters going contrary to his wishes, he entertained a settled conviction that he was unpopular, and that opposition to his views arose from this cause alone.

More than once when his Government was arousing hostile criticism he has said to me : ‘Ah, it is not my Government they dislike ; I tell you, it is me they dislike.’ I do not think that till quite the end of his life he could divest himself of the idea that the great mass of the people of England were prejudiced against him. His early experiences of the House of Commons and the hostile reception of his first speech had made a deep and long-abiding impression on his mind. When he first entered upon a political career, there were many of the older politicians who declined to take him seriously—Dizzy, the dandy, they knew, but Dizzy, the statesman, they were hardly prepared to accept. It was only when he had reached the highest pinnacle to which political ambition in England can aspire that he became convinced that his unpopularity was a thing of the past. I remember congratulating him, and his reply : ‘It is all well and good now—I feel my position assured.’

Lord Beaconsfield often quoted to me a portion of a speech he had delivered to the Manchester Athenæum in 1844, and I think that he considered the lines in question the finest he had ever uttered. I wrote them out in old English letters, which pleased him very much, and he affixed his signature at the end. Probably they are well known, but the sentiment is so fine, and the construction so dignified and elegant, that I cannot resist quoting them once again :

‘Knowledge is like the mystic ladder in the patriarch’s dream. Its base rests on the primeval earth, its crest is lost in the shadowy splendour of

the Empyrean, while the great authors, who for traditional ages have held the chain of science and philosophy, of poesy and erudition, are the angels ascending and descending the sacred scale, maintaining, as it were, the communication between man and heaven.'

For money, except as the means to an end, I do not believe that he cared at all. In early life he was much hampered and troubled by the lack of it; indeed, there were times when I know that his financial worries were of terrible severity. Later on these passed away, and he found himself (though never a rich man) in a fairly satisfactory financial position—a relief which he much appreciated, as it enabled him to pursue his political career without strain or preoccupation. The mere instinct of accumulation—the financial greed which is a not uncommon characteristic of humanity—was in him totally and absolutely absent, or rather non-existent. As a novelist, I fancy his two most successful books, from a monetary point of view, were '*Lothair*' and '*Endymion*'—I believe each of these two to have brought in about £8,000 to their author. For some time after the publication of '*Endymion*' he was very much worried, fearing lest Messrs. Longmans, the publishers, should not be recouped for the money they had sunk in the production of the work. However, all ended well, as its sale was quite as large as had been anticipated. Personally, I am a great admirer of these books, but I must confess that the large sale they attained somewhat surprised me, for, as novels, they were hardly calculated to appeal to the general public, though I suppose a great many

people read them merely from admiration for the author. I recall to mind that Lord Beaconsfield told me one day that, getting into a hansom-cab, the driver suddenly opened the trap-door at the top and said : 'I know who you are, sir, and have read all your books, bar '*'Lothair.'*' An incident at which he was much amused.

Mr. and Mrs. Disraeli, the great statesman's father and mother, were friends of my parents, and as a child I must often have seen the gifted author of the '*Curiosities of Literature*', but I can remember nothing about him, it is so long ago. Lord Beaconsfield's sister, however, I knew very well, and often wonder that more is not remembered about her. A woman of strong character and commanding intellect, in face she bore a remarkable resemblance to the great statesman. Without doubt, she did a great deal to strengthen her brother's determination to attain high political distinction. Unfortunately, she died at the end of the fifties, just having lived long enough to see Benjamin Disraeli become the brilliant statesman which it had been her sole ambition to make him.

Lord Beaconsfield was, outwardly, at all events, phlegmatic, hardly ever allowing his countenance to give any indication of what was passing in his mind.

He was temperate, as a rule, in speaking of political opponents, and I never recall having heard him make any mention of his great antagonist Gladstone ; I doubt whether he ever did, except under compulsion. I recollect, however, an attack upon Mr. Lowe (afterwards Lord Sherbrooke), with whom he was for the time being extremely angry on account

of his opposition to the proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India—a stroke of policy which he had set his heart upon carrying through.

I believe he was not altogether uninfluenced by the picturesque aspect of this imperial title in addition to its political expediency, for, as can be learnt from his books, his mind was naturally inclined to revel in scenes of almost Oriental splendour.

I also fancy that it was this love of the picturesque which caused his intense and very sincere devotion to the aristocracy of England, for which he entertained a real, though in no way snobbish, veneration.

The romance of the past was attractive to his mind. The great barons of old and their feats of arms, the tournaments and pageants of the Middle Ages—all these things stirred and influenced his imagination, causing him to regard the aristocracy of his own day as being the direct and rightful representatives of the picturesque nobles of feudal times. He took an extraordinary interest in the history of our great families, and when any new title was conferred would willingly give his aid in searching in old records for one of a historic and appropriate kind. I know that, when my cousin was made Marquis of Abergavenny, Lord Beaconsfield was much exercised as to the particular title which should be assumed, making many suggestions, and lamenting the appropriation of the old Nevill titles, such as Warwick, Beauchamp, and Westmoreland, by other families, which rendered their assumption impossible to one whose ancestor had been the great King-maker. He wrote on November 29, 1875 :

‘MY DEAR NEVILL,

‘The Queen has graciously granted my wish about the marquisate, and we must now think of your title.

‘I have been looking over your annals, but I see the parvenu families have appropriated almost all the glories of the Nevills. Marquis de Clare does not sound very well; Earl de Clare would be better.

‘Is there any good reason why you should not be Marquis of Nevill? It may be said Nevill is only a name, and therefore it should be Marquis Nevill, which I for one dislike. But Nevill is also the name of a race, a mighty clan very busy in our earlier history. Why not commemorate so great a historical name?

‘The Queen is so highly displeased if premature paragraphs get about respecting honours that I have not yet consulted Garter, who might assist us in this and in other respects. I go to Windsor to-day for a short visit, and then to Longleat, and then to Crichel, but all letters will reach me. We want the *Gazette* after Christmas, the early half of January, 1876, but the arrangements always take time.

‘Yours ever,
‘D.’

Mrs. Disraeli, who was also a very great friend of mine, was just as talkative in society as her husband was silent. She was, indeed, a most vivacious woman. I remember her indignation with reference to a photographer suggesting a pose to her ‘dear Dizzy’ (so she always called him): ‘The man said he

actually wanted him to be taken leaning on a chair, but I soon settled that, for I said : "Dizzy has always stood alone, and he shall continue to do so!"'

She adored her husband, and used to chatter away nineteen to the dozen when with him, whilst he, silent and preoccupied, did not, I fancy, listen to one word. He took good care, however, not to let her know it.

Lady Beaconsfield began to suffer from ill-health in 1872, and was obliged to remain in town all that summer, when I received the following letter :

'GROSVENOR GATE,
'September 26, 1872.

'MY DEAR DOROTHY,

'Yes ! we have been here the whole summer. Such a thing never happened before. It tells our sad tale, but I rejoice to tell you also that absolutely this morning we are going to Hughenden. There has been of late a decided improvement in my wife's health, and she now fancies that change of air will greatly benefit her. I am sorry we are to make the experiment in the fall of the leaf in a sylvan country, but we could go nowhere else. Home alone could insure her the comforts and the ease which an invalid requires.

'What she suffers from is a total lack of appetite. No constitution except one of her unrivalled buoyancy could bear up against an almost total lack of sustenance.

'Though we are in Park Lane, we have never entered the town, though we have taken frequent drives in the environs of London. We seem never

to have known our wondrous capital before ; such beautiful churches, and so many ! almost as many as the gorgeous gin-palaces. Lady Beaconsfield calculates we have travelled upwards of two hundred miles. She sends you her love, but does not see this letter, and desired me to say she was much better.

‘Yours ever,
‘D.’

At her death he sent me a very touching note :

‘HUGHENDEN MANOR,
‘January 31, 1873.

‘MY DEAR DOROTHY,

‘I was grateful to you for your sympathy in my great affliction—the supreme sorrow of my life.

‘You knew her well ; she was much attached to you, and never thought or spoke of you but with tenderness and pleasure.

‘Throughout more than a moiety of my existence she was my inseparable and ever-interesting companion.

‘I cannot in any degree subdue the anguish of my heart. I leave this now, my only home, on Monday next for the scene of my old labours. I have made an attempt to disentangle myself from them, but have failed. I feel quite incapable of the duties, but my friends will be indulgent to a broken spirit, and my successor will in time appear.

‘Adieu ! dear Dorothy, and believe me,
‘Ever yours,
‘D.

‘I shall be at a hotel in town, George Street, Hanover Square (Edwards’).’

Very precise and particular about grammar, Lord Beaconsfield, I think, took great pains in writing even the most ordinary kind of letter. It will be observed that he writes ‘a hotel’ not ‘an hotel,’ which I think is the usual way ; he was rather fond of alliteration, as may be realized by anyone who cares to study his speeches. Bernal Osborne alluded to this tendency in ‘A Voice from Palace Yard,’ a political squib supposed to have been spoken by the statue of Canning :

‘Another and a smaller troop appears,
Of antique notions, yet of tender years ;
Alliterative Dizzy leads the van,
Whilst Lane Fox hails him as the “Coming Man.”’

Mr. Bernal Osborne and Lord Beaconsfield, though political opponents, were friends, and though the former was a stern political foe, he would seldom lose an opportunity of extolling the genius and indomitable energy of his great adversary. Oddly enough, the first constituency contested by Mr. Osborne (Wycombe) was also the very one which Mr. Disraeli first made such strenuous efforts to represent. It was at that time when, standing on Tory-Radical principles, someone having posted up a bill warning electors to beware of Disraeli as a Tory in disguise, that the latter said : ‘A Tory in disguise ! I will tell you who is a Tory in disguise —it is a Whig in place !

Though not in any way a gourmet, there were two things of which Lord Beaconsfield was especially fond—one venison, the other strawberries. With the former my cousin from his park at Eridge kept him well supplied, whilst during their season I used

to constantly send him baskets of his favourite fruit, which, as it happened, flourished to especial perfection in our Sussex garden, and in return he seldom failed to send me a very pretty letter of thanks ; such a one was the following :

‘ April 21, 1864.

‘ DEAR DOROTHY,

‘ You have made me not only the most graceful, but the most magnificent of presents. I have never feasted on my favourite fruit in entirety before ; they were not only too plenteous, but really without precedent superb. Two nights after the House of Commons, and to-day, after a long council at the British Museum, your delicious strawberries, as absorbing as yourself, have refreshed and renovated me.

‘ When are you coming to town ? and how do your *Coniferæ* and all their graceful companions flourish ? I envy you in your exotic groves.

‘ What do you think of the Prince of Wales and Garibaldi ? For a quasi-crowned head to call on a subject is strange—and that subject a rebel !

‘ Mary Anne sends you 1,000 kind messages, and I am always

‘ Your affectionate
‘ D.’

Another graceful note :

‘ 10, DOWNING STREET,
‘ WHITEHALL, 1878.

‘ The most charming deputation I ever received. They faithfully represented in their fragrance and

their brightness the dear friend who sent them to her attached

‘BEACONSFIELD.’

He was delighted with the ‘New Republic,’ by Mr. Mallock, which I sent him to read, and which, after having finished, he mislaid :

‘DEAR DOROTHY,

‘Here is the lost book, lost amid changes of residence and Ministries.

‘Your bookplate* is excellent, and I think I shall adopt it.

‘One of the advantages in losing for a time these volumes is that I have enjoyed the happy opportunity of quietly and critically reading them at Hughenden. It is a capital performance, and the writer will, I fancy, take an eminent position in our future literature.

‘I hope you are well. I have been a prisoner for five weeks with the gout, which attacked me with renovating ferocity, for it cured all my other ailments.

‘Yours ever,

‘BEACONSFIELD.’

The primrose is now generally supposed to have been Lord Beaconsfield’s favourite flower, but I cannot say for certain that I ever heard him express any particular partiality for it, though I dare say he may have done so.

As a matter of fact, I believe that Queen Victoria at the proper season invariably sent Lord Beaconsfield

* ‘Stolen from Lady Dorothy Nevill.’

primroses from the slopes at Windsor, and it is probable that, having expressed to someone his warm appreciation of these flowers, it was in consequence assumed that the great statesman had a strong partiality for the primrose.

I sat next Mr. Gladstone at a dinner some time after Lord Beaconsfield's death, and in the course of conversation he suddenly said : 'Tell me, Lady Dorothy, upon your honour, have you ever heard Lord Beaconsfield express any particular fondness for the primrose ?' I was compelled to admit that I had not, upon which he said : 'The gorgeous lily, I think, was more to his taste.'

Mr. Gladstone was very often unaware of the measures taken for his personal safety. I remember his talking about the safety of the times, and how public men could now go unguarded everywhere, whilst he was sitting at a dinner-table with two detectives, provided by Scotland Yard in order to watch over him, standing in the room, whilst another was upstairs ready to mix with the guests at the party which was afterwards to be given. The Grand Old Man's two guardians at the dinner were dressed as footmen, one standing immediately behind his chair, whilst the other took up a position directly opposite on the other side of the table.

I, who was in the secret, was naturally considerably amused. Mr. Gladstone was, indeed, much inclined to an optimistic state of mind, and, I think, invariably believed that, during his tenure of power, everyone must of necessity be perfectly peaceful and contented. When in society, he was always urbane and agreeable ; indeed, it was impossible not to be

fascinated by his most charming flow of conversation, for he possessed the faculty of being able to adapt it to the capacity of any listener ; there was, besides, something almost mesmeric about it—at least, I used to think so whenever I met him in society. Towards the end of his life he wrote me a somewhat pathetic letter in return for a little book about the Walpoles, a family in which he had always shown much interest :

‘ HAWARDEN CASTLE,
‘ October 6, 1894.

‘ DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘ I thank you very much for your letter, your emblem (which I am so unworthy to receive), and the very interesting work which you have kindly sent me.

‘ In or out of London I should be very glad to meet you. But the condition of my senses, not sight only, perhaps not mainly warns me that London is becoming for me a name, a recollection, an echo from the past. The year hand on the clock of time is marked 85, and has nearly run its course ; I have much cause to be thankful, still more to be prospective.

‘ Most faithfully yours,
‘ W. E. GLADSTONE.’

The emblem alluded to was the primrose stamped on the paper of my letter, which I had specially chosen, knowing it would amuse the venerable statesman.

By many Conservatives the Grand Old Man was regarded as a sort of Satanic anarchist, whose sole

aim and object in life was to destroy the British Empire; and there were not wanting those who would have absolutely declined to meet him.

Mr. Froude, I remember, profoundly distrusted the Liberal leader and hated his politics. On one occasion, when accepting an invitation to lunch, the great historian added : ‘I should not object to meeting the Devil, who, I hear, is an agreeable gentleman when you know his ways, but I am glad that you promise to spare me the G.O.M.’ For Mr. Chamberlain, on the other hand, Mr. Froude entertained an unbounded admiration, and when he made his visit to America he wrote to me : ‘My American friends agree in telling me that Chamberlain’s mission is foredoomed to failure. Perhaps he knows as much as they do, and a little more.’

Lord Beaconsfield, I believe, only met Mr. Chamberlain a very few times—not, as far as I know, more than three or four at the most.

I recollect staying at Castle Bromwich just after he had been made a peer (the time is fixed in my memory by the fact that one of the little daughters of the house collected autographs and things of that sort, and Lord Beaconsfield said he would give her the first envelope directed ‘The Earl of Beaconsfield,’ which he did). There was to be a great garden-party, at which most of the notables of Birmingham were to be present, amongst others, a rising young politician, of whom great things were predicted. The evening before at dinner ‘Dizzy’ did nothing but talk of his intense desire to meet this young man. Joseph Chamberlain was his name, and he said he had heard much of his great clever-

ness and ability. Seldom in his latter years have I seen him so animated or eager. The morrow came, but, alas! all his cherished hopes were doomed to disappointment, for torrents of rain fell and the redoubtable young politician was not amongst the few visitors who braved the storm to attend the garden-party.

In 1876 my brother, the Hon. Frederick Walpole, M.P. for the Northern Division of Norfolk, died, when Lord Beaconsfield, a very old and intimate friend, as I have said, of my elder brother, Lord Orford, wrote him a most sympathetic letter :

'April 4, 1876.

' MON BIEN CHER,

' Your note last night was another offering to the altar of our friendship, on which a clear bright flame has burnt for forty years and more. I will not attempt to console you in a severe domestic sorrow, for consolation is ever fruitless, but I am privileged to offer you my sympathy. I will say nothing now of the public consequence of this untimely death further than to express my hope that nothing may be done without your advice and sanction, and that the name of Walpole may always be connected with the county of Norfolk.

' Ever your devoted friend,
 'D.'

About the political future of the British Empire Lord Beaconsfield entertained the most grave forebodings, and he did not conceal his idea that the country was being governed in a manner disastrous to its real interests, and feared the ultimate

supremacy of the most unscrupulous and least restrained portion of the nation.

In his latter days, indeed, he became extremely pessimistic, as the following letter written to Lord Abergavenny indicates :

‘January 24, 1881.

‘MY DEAREST NEVILL,

‘I must thank you for your kind recollection of me in your *chasse*, and ought to have done so before, but, like Nature, or, rather, town and country, I have been snowed up in mind as much as in body, and have been unable even to spell.

‘There is no good news. I believe a Turkish-Greek war is now inevitable, but they hope to localize it ; I fear a hope and not a belief. Everything else is as black as Erebus. . . .

‘Yours ever,

‘BEACONSFIELD.’

As a young man Lord Beaconsfield was a great dandy, and, like his friend D’Orsay, devoted a good deal of time and thought to the question of dress ; but as time went on all interest in sartorial questions left him, and in his latter days no one would ever have thought that the bent and grave statesman in a somewhat worn overcoat had once prided himself upon the impeccable cut and appearance of his clothes.

Towards the end of his life he aged greatly, worn out, I think, by the tremendous struggle which his life had ever been—a struggle not only against prejudice, but also against every sort of difficulty ; for, as I have before said, in the earlier portion of his

career he was exposed to most terrible worries in addition to his political ones.

Death came to him in her most gracious form, for he passed away in sleep, and, fit ending for a great political leader, his last effort was to raise himself up as if to address the House.*

* 'HERTFORD STREET,
' MAYFAIR,
' Wednesday.

'MY DEAR DOLLY,

'The account given in the papers from one of the doctors to the Press Association is strictly accurate. Lord Beaconsfield died quite quietly apparently in sleep. His last movement was an attempt to draw himself up, as he always did when he rose to speak in either House, a movement strangely familiar to those who watched him. They think he did not suffer ; he simply ceased to breathe. You will find, I think, quite correct accounts in the *Times* and *Morning Post*. . . .

'Lord Barrington is a good deal worn by anxiety, but is not ill, I am thankful to say. This weather must be fatal to many invalids, especially old people ; it has tried to snow here once or twice to-day.

'Ever yours affectionately,
' ISABEL BARRINGTON.'

CHAPTER XVI

Collecting and amateur work—Art galleries—Sir Purdon Clarke and the Victoria and Albert Museum—Mr. Jones and his collection in Piccadilly—Lack of good English furniture at South Kensington—My iron-work—Old china—A cheap tea-service—Great dealers of the past—The artistic horrors of the Victorian Era—An interesting set of plates—Mr. Alfred Rothschild—French furniture—The family of Caffieri—‘La Bande Noire’—Noteworthy copies of fine pieces and their cost—Some unique chairs—A Browning portrait which turned out to be Dickens.

I HAVE always been much interested in art and artistic people. I do not mean the kind of art which is associated with affectation and oleaginous pedantry, but the cult of what is curious, beautiful, or interesting. At different times I have collected all sorts of things and attempted many kinds of amateur work, including book illumination, at which I can say, without vanity, that I achieved a considerable measure of success; leather-working, wood-carving, and, of late years, a kind of old-fashioned paper-work, which I have found very fascinating. This consists in arranging little slips of coloured papers into decorative designs, as was done at the end of the eighteenth century. When completed, this work is made up into boxes, trays, or mounts for pictures. One fre-

quently meets with old tea-caddies and screens embellished by such ornamentation. Years ago ladies used to spend much more of their time in artistic work of some kind or other, for there were not then the many distractions which exist to-day—indeed, in the country, some sort of work was a positive necessity ; and though, no doubt, by far the greater portion of what was done was absolutely hideous, useless, and horrible, yet it served the purpose of passing away many an hour which otherwise would have been given up to insufferable boredom.

I must have visited a prodigious quantity of art exhibitions and the like, for I usually go whenever an intimation of anything of this sort is sent to me. It is a good plan, for very often most interesting exhibits are unexpectedly discovered. Of all the museums and picture-galleries which now abound in London, the one I like best of all is the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington, to which, before the Americans lured Sir Purdon Clarke over to New York (there to preside over the Metropolitan Museum), I used to be a very frequent visitor. I can, indeed, hardly control my revengeful feelings towards the great people on the other side of the Atlantic for having perpetrated such an act of spoliation ; for, in addition to his great personal charm, Sir Purdon was, in his own line, a good head and shoulders above anyone else in England, and his loss is simply irreparable to all who are interested in art. Never shall I forget the many pleasant hours I have passed in the galleries at South Kensington, the while availing myself of the rich store of knowledge upon which he was ever ready to draw for the en-

lightenment and guidance of his friends. The real gem of all the collections in the museum is, without doubt, the magnificent Jones bequest, of which one can never tire. I remember seeing these treasures of French art long before they had gone to the gallery they now occupy, having once paid a visit to the house occupied by Mr. Jones (No. 95, Piccadilly, next the Naval and Military Club), who himself showed me his treasures and explained the history of the principal *chefs-d'œuvre* to me.

This house (now pulled down) was of very moderate size, and how it contained all the beautiful things was really marvellous; it is true that some of them were rather crowded together, but nevertheless there was no positive discomfort. The famous little bureau which is supposed to have belonged to Marie Antoinette stood, I remember, between the opening which connected Mr. Jones's two drawing-rooms; these were certainly a good deal too crowded. He formed his collection with the greatest discrimination and taste, and I fancy his estimate as to the artistic value of anything he decided to purchase was very seldom wrong. Before commencing to form his collection Mr. Jones thoroughly educated himself in French eighteenth-century art, and, I believe, for about twelve years frequented all the great sales, whilst never making even a single bid. Thus by careful observation did he perfect a judgment which, when he once began to enter the lists as a bidder, was not long in obtaining the recognition which it so thoroughly deserved.

I have been a follower, I may say, of the fortunes of the collections at South Kensington from their

very beginning, having been present at some of the early meetings when the first idea of the museum was mooted. I knew Mr. (after Sir Henry) Cole (known as King Cole) very well, and frequently used to go and lunch and dine with him at the South Kensington, as the Victoria and Albert Museum was then called. He was very proud of the tiled room there, and here it was that these feasts used to be given, Mr. Cole having an idea that its particular style of decoration would be widely adopted, which has not been the case. His taste in art was, perhaps, rather peculiar ; I remember his thinking that he had invented a new style for furniture, very much as in recent years did the inventor of the atrocious *art nouveau* ; however, whether his taste was good or bad, the fact remains that he was practically the founder of the splendid museums which are now of such immense value from an educational as well as an artistic point of view.

Whilst on the subject of the Victoria and Albert Museum, I cannot help saying that to me it has always seemed a great pity that no good representative collection of old English furniture should be contained within its walls. There should, I think, be one or two rooms entirely furnished with the best work of Chippendale and Sheraton, as well as some specimen pieces made by the other great English makers ; such bits of English furniture as are now in the galleries are neither abundant in number nor, with some few exceptions, very remarkable in quality of workmanship. Here, surely, is an opportunity for some millionaire, for it is truly lamentable that whilst there is a splendid gallery (the Jones collec-

tion) filled with some of the finest existing specimens of French eighteenth-century furniture, the visitor who is desirous of seeing the best English work of that period cannot hope to find it adequately represented.

It was owing to Sir Purdon Clarke that I placed my collection of Sussex iron-work at the Victoria and Albert Museum, where it still remains. I formed this collection years ago when I used to live in Sussex, purchasing the different pieces for the most part in old cottages and farmhouses. Some of the old fire-backs were extremely ornamental, but the fire-dogs, of which I collected a great number, were my especial favourites. Most of the iron-work of my collection, such as rush-holders, fire-tongs, and the like necessities of old-world cottage life, has now become completely obsolete in the farmhouses and cottages, to which they formed a useful and artistic adornment. At the time I was collecting, many people did not fail to express their scepticism as to the value of all 'the old rubbish,' as they called it, which I was getting together; but I am glad to say that my judgment has been completely vindicated, and to-day, instead of 'old rubbish,' I am told it is a 'valuable collection.' The Sussex iron industry came to an end at the beginning of the last century, but its memory is perpetuated by the many 'hammer-ponds' fed by little streams which abound in the portion of the county known as the Weald. In its day Sussex iron was highly esteemed, the railings surrounding St. Paul's Cathedral being made of it; a great portion of these railings are, I believe, still in their original position. In recent years attempts have

been made to revive the art of producing English iron-work of artistic design, but somehow the modern work always has an appearance of being wanting in boldness, besides tending to an over-elaboration of decoration, which produces a very unsatisfactory effect.

A stroll through the different galleries at the Museum is always a delight to me ; there is so much to see, so much to learn. Ah ! what pleasant moments I have passed there amidst the numerous beautiful and artistic things, so delightful to the eyes of a collector, which, in a small way, I can call myself, having always been especially interested in old furniture and china ! Both of these have greatly increased in value, as can be realized when one thinks of the prices of old days. With regard to china, a striking instance of this is the famous dinner-service made for the Prince de Rohan in 1772, which originally cost £828, and one half of which was sold at auction in 1870 for £10,200. The story of some china in my own possession shows how prices have risen in recent years.

Many years ago I purchased from Mr. Webb of Bond Street, the leading spirit in an excellent firm which for many years has ceased to exist, a tea-service of Rose du Barry china, consisting of twelve cups and saucers, a large and small teapot, together with basin and milk-jug, every piece perfect, paying for this beautiful set a sum well under three figures. Some ten years after I had bought it, Mr. Webb came to me and made me a proposal to buy it back at double the price he had originally received, but being unwilling to part with my tea-service, I

declined his offer, tempting though it appeared. Since then the value of this set has increased by leaps and bounds, and within recent years I have been offered sums which Mr. Webb would have thought preposterous, if not fantastic.

Another great dealer in old days was Forrest, of the Strand, who during the cholera epidemic was declared to be almost off his head with fear; the poor man, indeed, was so terrified that, hoping to find safety in the country, he left London. But Fate ordained that the scourge should follow him even to his rural retreat, for no sooner had he settled down amidst bucolic surroundings than a violent attack seized him, and, his nerves being already much upset, in a very short time he fell a victim to the epidemic he had sought to avoid.

Forrest was a man of considerable knowledge and artistic judgment; we bought a good many things from him, amongst them some Louis XVI. sideboards which are a delight to the eye.

I am afraid that, personally, I care but little for periods in furniture and decoration; I mean attempting to fill a room with things belonging to one period alone. I have, indeed, always been fond of surrounding myself with such furniture and bibelots as I like, quite irrespective of their period, history, or style. Oddly enough, whilst my own taste lies strongly in the direction of English art (I am a great lover of Sheraton and Chippendale furniture, as well as of all kinds of English china), my most valuable possessions happen to be French. There were great opportunities for collecting in old days, and I often sigh when I think of the many chances I must have

let slip at a time when fine eighteenth-century English furniture was to be easily procured, for in the early and mid-Victorian eras it was an almost universal custom to consign even fine pieces of that period either to the garret or the servants' hall, their place being filled by the shapeless and vulgar monstrosities so much esteemed during that inartistic epoch. The generation of to-day, which attaches such importance to Chippendale and Sheraton, cannot realize the artistic crimes perpetrated at a time, which, indeed, may be called the dark age of house decoration. I remember, for instance, my father, at his house in Norfolk, making a clean sweep of all the old English furniture and substituting in its stead abominations from London which still linger in my memory as horrible beyond all words.

Capo de Monté china, when perfect, is most decorative. I bought some, I remember, at Lady Blessington's sale at Gore House. I may add that this sort of china, when really good, may always be recognised by a certain brown colour which here and there in a sort of way obscures the gold.

One of my treasures, which I value very highly, is a little bust of Frederick the Great upon a pedestal, for it is the sole survivor of a number of groups and figures which were purchased by my father from the old manufactory at Meissen. Most unfortunately, all of these, with the exception of my little bust, were destroyed in the disastrous fire at the Pantheon where they had been stored for safety. It was also whilst on a tour on the Continent that my father formed a dessert-service of a rather interesting kind, which is now in my possession, ordering at every

city of any importance in which he stayed a plate painted with a representation of the principal street or square in the town with other smaller views round the border—an excellent and artistic manner of commemorating a pleasant if very leisurely journey.

Mr. Alfred Rothschild, the finest amateur judge of French eighteenth-century art in England, possesses much beautiful Sèvres in his wonderful collection, which is a monument of what sound judgment and unrivalled taste can effect. I believe that as a judge of French pictures Mr. Rothschild stands absolutely alone, as he does, also, in quite another sphere—I mean that of kindness of heart and lavish generosity.

French furniture of the very best quality was, even at the date of its manufacture, always very costly, for the enormous amount of work which was expended upon it had to be done with minute delicacy and extraordinary artistic finish; a secretaire made by Reisner for Beaumarchais is known to have cost 85,000 francs—nearly £4,000. The most costly portion of these pieces of furniture was the metal work, the chiselling of which could only be confided to workmen who were in reality artistic specialists ; most of these expert metal-workers, indeed, belonged to families which for two or three generations had devoted themselves to producing works of art. Such a family was that of the Caffieris, the founder of which, Philippe, an Italian, born at Sorrento, was induced by Cardinal Mazarin to take up his residence in France. I do not think that it is generally known that the first of the French Caffieris was an especial adept in the carving of the

highly ornamental sterns of warships, whilst one of his sons entirely devoted himself to this kind of work, taking up his abode at Brest.

The large amount of fine French furniture still existing is, when one comes to think of it, really astonishing in view of the destruction which took place during the Revolution, when about half the châteaux of France were destroyed by fire and rapine. It is probable, however, that already during that stormy epoch there were shrewd persons who, well knowing where fine pieces were to be found, took care to have their agents amongst the rioters, and thus, to their own profit, contrived to save a good deal that was valuable from utter destruction. Under the Monarchy of July such châteaux in France as still retained any particular treasures of art were subjected to assaults of a different character, for at that time there was formed a large and wealthy syndicate of curiosity dealers, who organized a systematic visitation, going from château to château, which they stripped of such antique furniture and decorations as they deemed worthy of their attention, the reluctant consent of the impoverished owners being obtained by reason of the large sum of money which the syndicate was able to command. Its operations were, indeed, so thorough as to cause it to receive the name of 'La Bande Noire,' and the traces of its depredations may still be observed in many of the fine historic structures in France yet remaining in the hands of private individuals.

The manufacture of really first-class copies of the best sort of old French furniture must ever be a very costly business In the Paris Exhibition of 1878

was an exact reproduction of the famous Bureau du Roi in the Louvre, which was sold for £3,500. This escritoire is at the Grange in Hampshire, Lord Ashburton's beautiful house, to which in past days I have paid so many pleasant visits, the happy remembrance of which, however, is tinged with sadness whenever I recall the death, at an age when there seemed many bright years before her, of that most gentle, lovable, and sweetest of women, Mabel Lady Ashburton.

In the Wallace Collection is another copy of the Bureau du Roi ; this took three years to make, and cost £2,000.

Far more is now known about French furniture than used to be the case in early and mid-Victorian days, when very often almost priceless pieces stood unappreciated in spare rooms and attics ; those were times when a veritable cult of ugliness prevailed, whilst crude and glaring contrasts of colour rendered the drawing-rooms of that day terrible beyond description.

At the present day the different styles and periods of *objets d'art* are very accurately understood ; this was not so some thirty or forty years ago. We had a Louis XV. cabinet, I remember, which had been purchased more, I think, on account of its fitting into a certain place than from any exaggerated idea of its artistic value. One day in the sixties a great expert of that day chanced to examine it, and went into ecstasies of delight, declaring that it was an absolutely genuine piece and of great value, which, of course, pleased us very much. However, two or three years ago an expert of the present day examined

this cabinet, and, after a careful scrutiny, declared that the piece in question, though old, was not made in the reign of Louis XV. at all. His reasons for this opinion were based upon a solid foundation, as we realized when he pointed out the peculiar modelling of the brasswork and explained that there was every probability of its having been made by some of those French workmen who came over to England during the great Revolution ; there are certain marks in the work done by these men which are easily to be recognised. This cabinet, then, is about one hundred and ten years old, exceedingly decorative, but yet lacking in that indefinable something which belongs to its supposed epoch. On the other hand, I possess a little commode (valued thirty or forty years ago at almost nothing at all), for which, within the last few years, a very large sum has been offered. It is undoubtedly a very beautiful piece of furniture, of most graceful lines, with mounts of simple design—indeed, it was its very simplicity of decoration which caused it to be despised forty years ago ; at which time old French furniture, in England at all events, was understood but by the very few. Now, alas ! it is difficult to discover really good pieces, which, besides, command such prices as only millionaires can afford ; nevertheless, great finds are sometimes made in out-of-the-way shops and at sales, when the contents of old houses in remote parts of the country are dispersed.

Unsuspected treasures, however, sometimes lurk in the most unlikely places. Only a short time ago some ladies giving up an old house in an eastern county were about to have their furniture and

pictures put up to auction. They expected to obtain at most about £200, but, fortunately for them, a local connoisseur happened to pay a visit, and, looking round, strongly advised that certain pieces of furniture and a few pictures should either be sent up to Christie's or sold privately, for, as he pointed out, at a local sale it was not likely that very large prices would be realized for things which, though in a very bad condition, he felt were sure of very considerable value. This advice was followed, and owing to his kindly offices over £2,000 was realized by the private sale of such of the contents of the house as had been selected by him as valuable, in addition, of course, to the sum obtained by the public sale of what was left !

There were in this house twelve chairs and a settee with a triple back of most extraordinary design, but all in a terrible state of preservation. They were somewhat of a Queen Anne period pattern, yet distinguished by several very unusual features, having ormolu mounts, with the front legs terminating in hoofs of gilt metal. A flat piece of wood in the centre of each back had a medallion covered with glass, on which was painted the arms, crest, coronet, and supporters of that Earl of Scarsdale (Nicholas Leake or Leke) who is the old nobleman represented in the first plate of Hogarth's '*Marriage à la Mode*,' pointing to his genealogical tree ; he came, of course, of a totally different family from the present Lord Scarsdale. He it was who owned Scarsdale House, Kensington, in which, before its demolition, I saw two beautiful old mantelpieces, now destroyed. These chairs and settees, to a casual

observer, presented something of a tawdry and even vulgar appearance, owing to the intrusion of the gilt mounts, which are rarely, if ever, seen in English furniture of such a period. However, this very eccentricity of design proved attractive to a London expert, who, notwithstanding the dilapidated state in which the chairs were, paid about £600 for the set. It afterwards changed hands more than once, and has recently, I believe, passed into the possession of an American collector at no less a figure than £2,000.

Even at the present day there must be many fine pieces of old furniture standing forgotten and neglected in out-of-the-way country houses, for there are still a great number of people who, themselves totally devoid of all knowledge of art, are too indolent to have their property examined by an expert.

I heard a short time ago of a console table by Reisner, with the most beautiful brasswork imaginable, for which £2,000 was asked by a well-known dealer, which price, as a matter of fact, was nothing out of the way for such a fine piece, and one of indisputable authenticity. The console in question had been purchased by a small dealer at a country sale for the sum of £24, there being no competition for it whatever, and the owner apparently having no idea that such a valuable asset was in his possession, for when put up for sale its shelves were covered with plush mats, whilst an atrociously painted china plaque was seen to have been inserted in the centre panel. The purchaser sold it to the London dealer for £1,200, which the latter frankly admitted whilst asking the £2,000. Another case of much the

same sort was that of a lady, a good connoisseur of French art, who, detained at Dover by the roughness of the sea, happened to take a stroll round the town, and came upon a magnificent little Louis XVI. *bonheur du jour* amongst a lot of rubbish in a tumble-down curiosity shop. She at once purchased it for a ridiculous price—£4, I think—and took it to her house in Paris, where for two or three years it was the admiration of her friends. Offer after offer was made for it, and eventually she yielded to the entreaties of a great dealer living near the Place Vendôme, and consented to part with it for two cabinets, priced at 16,000 francs, and a very comfortable sum in addition.

The lady who was fortunate enough to come upon this find was, however, possessed of considerable artistic knowledge, and it cannot be too thoroughly realized that, as a rule, curiosity shops in country towns contain very few artistic treasures for which a lesser price is demanded than would be asked by a first-rate London dealer. The countryside is too thoroughly explored in these days by emissaries deputed by great firms to secure anything which is really good ; in some cases, even, I believe old furniture is purposely placed in out-of-the-way villages in the hope of some eager amateur overcoming the sentimental scruples of the temporary possessor, who, piteously declaring ‘Gran’fether wouldn’t ha’ let it go,’ parts with it for four times its actual value.

Still, bargains are sometimes to be picked up, but only by those who possess a real knowledge and intuitive judgment as well, which enables them to distinguish the genuinely old from the carefully pre-

pared and doctored specimens, the sale of which at present constitutes a regular industry.

Pictures sometimes have queer vicissitudes, and portraits of one family are, I fancy, often sold as representing quite other people than those they really represent. A case of this sort of confusion quite recently came under my personal observation. A relative of mine chanced to come across a very good modern portrait on sale at a curiosity shop in a rather remote part of London. Inquiring who it might represent, he was told ‘Browning, painted by the well-known artist Felix Moscheles.’ Somewhat struck by the picture, and staying some time afterwards at a country house, the owner of which had been a great friend and admirer of the poet, he did not forget to mention having come across this portrait, upon which his host at once expressed a strong desire to acquire it. Accordingly, my relative, upon his return to town, sent for the dealer, who, it must be added, was but in a very modest way of business, and having ascertained that ‘Browning’ could be purchased for a comparatively insignificant sum, at once bought the picture on behalf of his worshipper, to whom he wrote announcing its impending arrival. He duly received in reply a warm letter of thanks, in which the writer, after expressing his delight at such a treasure having been secured, added: ‘I await with impatience the arrival of this painting, which will enable me once more to contemplate the features of my dear old friend.’ I had been informed of the negotiations, and, having myself known Browning, asked to see the picture before it was despatched to the country. Judge of my surprise when I found that, instead of Browning, the face

painted on the canvas represented the well-known countenance of Charles Dickens! I remonstrated with my relative, whilst informing him of my firm conviction as to the portrait being that of the great novelist; but the harm was done, and, Browning or Dickens, the picture bought, and this being so, he still declared his intention of sending it, for, as he pointed out, even if it really should turn out to be Dickens it did not much matter, as in that case he should be quite ready to take it himself. Within a day or two after its despatch a letter arrived in which the writer said that on unpacking his purchase he had been filled with astonishment to find 'that instead of the picture of my dear old friend Browning I discovered myself confronted by the face of Charles Dickens.' In spite of this, however, he should not think of relinquishing his purchase, as to the history of which he should at once make inquiries. In due course a date was found under a layer of dirt at the back of the frame, together with 'Gad's Hill,' whilst the signature of Mr. Moscheles could be indistinctly deciphered. Eventually the picture was sent to that artist (now a very great age), and he, after careful investigation, declared 'that the portrait submitted to him was undoubtedly his work, that it represented Charles Dickens, and had evidently been painted at Gad's Hill.' At the same time he added that he had no recollection of ever having painted such a picture, about which his memory was a complete blank; indeed, all he could say was to repeat that it was painted by his brush, but where, when, or under what circumstances, must, as far as he was concerned, remain a profound and impenetrable mystery.

CHAPTER XVII

Some bargains in French furniture—Unscrupulous dealers' tricks
—An American Rembrandt—The craze for old glass—
Famous art sales—My impressions of Strawberry Hill at
the sales of 1842 and 1883—The Bernal sale in 1855—The
Beckett Denison Collection—Artistic odds and ends—The
brothers Tassie—My friendship with Miss Kate Greenaway
—Her gentle nature and uncommercial spirit—Ruskin's
appreciation of her art — My dear old governess, Miss
Redgrave, an artist in water-colour of unusual excellence.

MANY and various, I believe, are the tricks of some of the less scrupulous art-dealers in these days, when such high prices are paid by newly-enriched millionaires, too often totally deficient in artistic knowledge. Quite recently I was told a story which well illustrates the subterfuges sometimes resorted to—subterfuges, indeed, which are nothing in reality but deliberate frauds.

A certain picture-dealer, in the habit of furnishing his more or less ignorant clients with masterpieces painted by the world's most famous painters, was in the habit of having the best of these gems produced to order by a Frenchman of undoubted talent—a man possessed of a peculiar knack of imitation, who had but to receive a commission to execute a Franz Hals, a Rubens, or any other great master, when the dealer would, within a very short time, receive the desired picture, signature and all complete.

The dealer I have mentioned, chancing one day to be in this artist's studio, saw there a particularly fine Rembrandt fresh from the brush, and though a copy, yet an undeniably fine work of art ; indeed, so much was he impressed by its merits that he said to the artist : ‘ You are really too fine a painter to limit yourself to this copying business : you should make a name, and I will give you a chance of doing it. You see this picture here, signed Rembrandt ; paint the signature out, and affix your own name to it. When this is done, I will buy it of you at a good price ’ (naming a figure a good deal over the one he usually paid for the copies), ‘ and sell it as your work ; in this way you will become known, and in all probability your fortune will be made.’

The artist was delighted, did as he was bid, and received payment for the picture, the dealer leaving special instructions that it should be consigned to an agent of his in New York, where, he declared, it would prove the sensation of the year. It was duly despatched, but just before its arrival the Custom officials received an anonymous communication warning them that an attempt was about to be made to evade the heavy duty imposed upon works of art entering America—‘ a picture was now on its way to the United States, signed by an unknown French artist, whose work it would purport to be ; but as a matter of fact this was but a blind, for it was in reality a particularly splendid example of the work of Rembrandt, whose signature, if an investigation were made, would be found concealed beneath that of the ostensible painter.’

The officials, on receiving this warning, naturally

doubled their vigilance, and within a short time the picture, signed as described, arrived, and was duly subjected to the suggested scrutiny, with the result that, after part of the Frenchman's name had been washed out, the signature of Rembrandt could be clearly desctried beneath. A great fuss was made, and a large fine inflicted. The American Press, of course, took up the matter, and described at great length the splendid artistic merits of the masterpiece whose value was so great as to cause an attempt to evade the enormous duty which the law decreed should be levied upon such a superlative work of art. There was much discussion in the Press, and, the fine being duly paid, the picture was at length admitted into New York, where it was almost at once sold to a millionaire connoisseur of old masters for an extremely large sum.

It need hardly be added that the original purchaser did not trouble to enlighten the American public as to the picture's previous history ; indeed, it is probable that he deemed his altruistic labours completed once the letter warning the United States Custom officials had been safely despatched.

Old English glass attracted me long before the present rage for collecting it had sprung into vogue. Many years ago I was fortunate enough to purchase one of a set of twelve wine-glasses made for Charles Edward, the Pretender ; it was, I believe, almost the sole survivor of a set, the fate of the rest of which it would be curious to know. I had documentary proof of its authenticity, and paid what, at that time, I considered a very large price—ten guineas. To-day, I am told, it would command a far greater

sum than that ; indeed, so highly has it been thought of by experts that a great manufacturer of artistic china and glass begged me to loan my treasure to him for the purpose of making some copies, which I did, and in return was very courteously presented with one of the reproductions, which I hasten to add were not made with the slightest idea of deception, for they are stamped on the bottom with the maker's name. I have also several other good bits of English glass. Within the last two years has arisen the craze for old glass, and though, no doubt, it is occasionally carried to an extreme, it is with great pleasure that I have seen the public taste awaken to the appreciation of what, a few years ago, the uncultured looked upon as so much rubbish. I think this is, in a great measure, due to Mr. Charles Jerningham, who, an untiring and discriminating enthusiast (as his glass in the Victoria and Albert Museum attests), was one of the very first to perceive what an untrodden field of artistic pleasure still awaited the collector.

One of the best ways of learning how to distinguish the good from the bad is to make a practice of frequenting Christie's, for, as most of the art treasures of England find their way there some time or other, a constant attendance at these famous auction-rooms becomes an artistic education in itself.

I used to take a delight in attending art sales, and still retain the catalogues of a good many sensational ones, amongst them those of the contents of Strawberry Hill in 1842 and in 1883. I was at both. To the first I went with my sister, and saw Strawberry Hill very much as Horace Walpole had

left it; some of the rooms were very small, more like little cabins than anything else. The recollection of the Grand Gallery, as it was called, still lingers in my mind's eye to-day; there hung the full-length picture of Lord Falkland in white by Van Somer which suggested the incident of the picture walking out of its frame, in the '*'Castle of Otranto'*'; also a lovely portrait of Laura Walpole, Duchess of Gloucester, by Reynolds, which sold for £735. The whole place, no doubt, was very gim-crack, but still charmed the imagination, much as does the soft tinkling note of an old spinet. The catalogue of the sale of 1842 is somewhat quaintly illustrated, and contains what is described as a characteristic article by Harrison Ainsworth. The auctioneer was the celebrated Mr. George Robins, who, the front page eloquently says, 'had been selected to sell by public competition.' Further on it proceeds, 'And it may fearlessly be proclaimed as the most Distinguished Gem that has ever adorned the Annals of Auctions. It is definitely fixed for Monday the 25th of April, 1842, and twenty-three following days (Sundays excepted). And within will be found a repast for the Lovers of Literature and the Fine Arts, of which bygone days furnish no previous example, and it would be in vain to contemplate it in time to come.' I believe this catalogue is now scarce.

In later years I was shown the famous table at which Reynolds painted his picture of the three Ladies Waldegrave, by Lord Carlingford, in whose possession it then was; it is now the property of Lord Waldegrave.

The second sale, in 1883, did not, of course, present anything like the interest of the first one. Lady Waldegrave spent enormous sums of money on Strawberry Hill (about £100,000, I believe), but I did not care for the particular style which she affected. I remember she filled the room, once adorned by Horace Walpole with pictures of his friends, with portraits, mostly by Sant, of her friends ; in this way she said she had carried on the original idea. The decoration and general effect of this room I shall never forget—it would, I think, have given Horace Walpole an epileptic seizure.

A sale which attracted very great attention took place in 1855, when the art collection, or, rather, collections, of Mr. Ralph Bernal, the father of Bernal Osborne, were sold by Messrs. Christie and Manson, at 93, Eaton Square. Mr. Bernal was renowned for the perfection of his taste as well as for his extraordinary artistic knowledge. A well-known member of the Liberal party, he was a prominent figure in the political and social life of his day. He was Chairman of Committees at the same time as his son was sitting in Parliament, and used jokingly to tell his friends that not the least difficult part of his duties was to keep the young Member for Wycombe in order. During a Parliamentary career of thirty-four years Mr. Bernal is said to have expended no less than £66,000 in election expenses. No wonder that, being asked to pay a large sum at Lincoln, after having already spent much money there, he said : ‘I suppose you will be soon wanting my coat as well !’

As an art connoisseur Mr. Bernal could be tempted by nothing that was not of the very best quality ;

indeed, so great was his reputation that, if he even carefully examined any *objet d'art* brought to him by a dealer, the latter would immediately attempt to put up the price, deeming that Mr. Bernal had observed something which had escaped a less expert examination. He it was who secured for £10 King Lothair's magic crystal, made in the tenth century. It had been purchased on the Continent by a Bond Street dealer, who had failed to realize the importance of the inscription, 'Lotharius Rex Franc. fieri jussit,' which Mr. Bernal read through the magnifying-glass which he invariably carried in his pocket. At his death the possession of this historical relic was competed for by both England and France; it is now in the treasure-room of the British Museum. There were many pictures in the Bernal Collection, and, though these had been originally purchased rather on account of their illustration of costume than for their value as paintings, they did not fail to excite brisk competition when put up for auction, for there were some very valuable ones amongst them. The Bernal sale occupied thirty-two days, and created a great sensation, many of the prices paid being considered enormous, as, indeed, they were for that time—to-day, of course, they would be thought ridiculously small.

Another great sale was that of the Beckett Denison Collection, which lasted for twenty-two days, at Christie's in 1885. There was a great struggle, I see noted in my catalogue, on the thirteenth day for a unique clock, originally from Lady Essex's Collection, in which a lizard pointed the hour, whilst two children were grouped close by. Eventually,

after a spirited contest between Mr. Stettiner and Mr. Charles Davis of Bond Street, it was knocked down to the latter for 615 guineas. I wonder what such a clock would fetch to-day ! At the same sale a beautiful ebony and mahogany cabinet, with the front formed of a large lacquer panel of exquisite design, went for only 195 guineas ; this also, as well as several other beautiful things, was secured by Mr. Charles Davis, one of the best judges of French art in this country, as was his father before him. It was through the latter that many of the splendid pieces now in the Wallace Collection were obtained by Lord Hertford.

Amongst the things which I have collected are the so-called glass pictures, which, now by no means inexpensive, could a few years ago be secured for a very moderate price indeed. I am very fond of artistic odds and ends, once having purchased a whole collection of old ivory toothpick boxes, many with the lids very prettily decorated with initials or emblematical designs ; inside most of these is a little strip of looking-glass to act as a little mouth mirror.

I have a good many gems and medallion portraits made by James Tassie, who, for some time, furnished the moulds for a great many of the cameos and intaglios of Wedgwood, as may be ascertained from the latter's first catalogue, published in 1773. James Tassie also executed the first plaster casts that were made from the Portland Vase before it had ceased to belong to the Barberini family. In 1783 the artist was commanded by Catherine of Russia to supply her with a complete collection of his ' pastes in imitation of Gems and Cameos.' The Tassie Col-

lection, which was sent to Russia, was arranged and described by Rudolph Raspe, a Hanoverian of considerable mental attainments ; it is said that he it was who wrote that famous book ‘The Adventures of Baron Münchhausen.’ A medallion by Tassie shows Raspe to have been a man with refined and intellectual features. James Tassie executed a very large number of medallion portraits ; a very interesting one is Sir Henry Raeburn, which by some has been declared to be the work of the subject himself.

When Tassie died, in 1799, his business was carried on by his nephew and heir William Tassie, who completed the imperial Russian Collection ; the gems and seals inscribed with original mottoes and emblems which the latter produced were especially popular. William Tassie also modelled portrait medallions, but his work by no means equalled in artistic merit that of his uncle ; one of his most popular portraits was a head of Pitt, which was adopted as a badge by the members of the Pitt Club. The premises occupied by the Tassies were at what is now the Cavour Hotel at No. 20, Leicester Square ; here William Tassie was wont to hold a sort of levée, which was attended by most of the art-lovers of his day, including Byron and Moore, who often lounged in. The elder Tassie, who died in June, 1799, was buried in Southwark, but at the present day the headstone, sculptured with a portrait medallion, has completely disappeared, and no memorial marks his grave. William Tassie was an exceedingly benevolent man, always ready to assist struggling members of his own profession ; he was also well known for his love of feeding the birds in

his garden at Kensington, then almost in the country. On one occasion, when a poor artist had come to him bewailing his extravagance in having spent a guinea on a ticket for the lottery organized to dispose of Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, Tassie at once said he would relieve his mind, and purchased the ticket from him, and by an extraordinary chance this very ticket, out of twelve thousand, won the first prize, the Shakespeare Gallery pictures and estate ! Tassie, I must add, made a very substantial present to the original owner of the ticket, and then sold his wind-fall by auction, where it realized £6,180.

The younger Tassie left a very large collection of his own and his uncle's work to the Board of Manufactures, Edinburgh, which bequest also included some paintings, amongst which was the portrait of James Tassie by David Allen ; these now hang in the National Gallery of Scotland, the rest of the collection being preserved in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and other collections also exist elsewhere ; but I fancy that, though more appreciated now than some years ago, the gems and medallions of these two talented Scotchmen are not yet estimated at their proper artistic worth, and, indeed, I dare say that many people have never even heard of the Tassies.

Some years ago Mr. John Gray, of Edinburgh, keeper of the Tassie Collection there, wrote an excellent little book on the Tassies, which has taught me most of what I know concerning the two modellers. I believe, however, that the work in question is now very difficult to obtain, being out of print.

A gem engraver never properly appreciated in England was William Brown, whose artistic ability so much pleased the Empress of Russia that she appointed him 'her gem sculptor.' He afterwards went to Paris, and did a good deal of work for the Court of Louis XVI. Brown's especial line lay in the direction of classical subjects, and also the portrayal of illustrious people; for the most part his medallions are signed with his initials only. With him lived Charles Brown, who did work of much the same character from about 1780 to 1789, which, however, he invariably signed 'Brown' in full, a signature never, I think, affixed to the work of the more distinguished of the two artists.

Lochée, an extremely able modeller, produced very small reproductions of medallions in Tassie paste, of which the 'Wedgwood' Lord and Lady Auckland and the Princesse de Lamballe are typical specimens.

Another worker in the same line was Miss Andras, modeller in wax to Queen Charlotte. It is probable that she studied under the elder Tassie; in any case, her style was formed upon his. As late as 1855, when she was about eighty years old, her medallions display no signs of weakness of execution. In 1799 she first exhibited her wax portraits at the Royal Academy, and many distinguished people were pleased to sit for her, amongst them George III., George IV., Wilberforce, James Watt, and Nelson. When Miss Andras was working at the medallion of the hero, the celebrated miniature painter, Robert Bowyer, happened to be painting the other side of the great Admiral's face, upon which Nelson laugh-

ingly declared ‘that he was not used to being attacked in that manner—starboard and larboard at the same time.’

If I have dwelt too long upon gem engravers and their work, my excuse must be a desire to excite an interest in a field of collecting which, I think, is even to-day (when most people have some special artistic hobby) rather neglected.

I much admired the art of Miss Kate Greenaway, who, indeed, may be said to have created a special school of her own, especially noticeable for its extreme daintiness of conception. I really do not think that full justice was ever done to her artistic merits, which, notwithstanding the somewhat trivial form in which they were embodied, were very real. Miss Greenaway herself was the very incarnation of modest gentleness, and very far from being fitted to adopt those commercial methods by which alone her work might have received full pecuniary appreciation ; in consequence she never made any great sums of money, though I have no doubt that some of those who presented her productions to the public did well enough. I particularly liked this sweet-natured artist, and, whenever I could induce her to come, got her to lunch or to go somewhere amusing, in order that she might have some distraction and be taken out of herself, for she worked very hard at her pictures of dainty little girls and boys. She used to write me characteristic little notes, which seldom failed to give some indication of that love of Nature which in her was incarnate. The following will show what I mean :

'11, PEMBERTON GARDENS,
HOLLOWAY, N.,
'April 13, 1884.

'DEAR LADY DOROTHY NEVILL,

'I am very glad to hear of you again. I know only too well how time goes—gets itself away somehow. Please do come. When you are back send me a card as soon as ever you have an afternoon to spare.

'The little Red House is *progressing*—not as fast as I could wish, but it has got to actual bricks and mortar now, so there's some hope it will be a real house in time.

'And you know I do look forward *very much* some time to seeing your county and your flowers, and a little more of yourself.

'My dear Lady Dorothy, those tempting treats of yours, that taking me to see old houses and villages, if there is a joy in life—

'That's exactly what I do like, for I never can *work* away from my own studio (unless it's sketching out), and I feel I'm out for a holiday, rather like the crowds we see up here partaking of Easter and penny ices.

'And I do enjoy being idle sometimes—only it isn't idle, after all, because I remember what I see, and it gets remembered—afterwards.

'I'm rather busy just now finishing a book, and longing to get to something fresh.

'The spring is surely the loveliest time, and the flowers this year are beyond and beyond. Never have I seen so many—and then they are so lovely ! I have seen cowslips already—and the pansies ; but

they are so beautiful, all, and the pears and cherries
—are not wild-cherry woods divine things ?

‘ I shall hope to see you, then ; you will tell me
when you will come.

‘ With very kind regards.

‘ Yours sincerely,

‘ KATE GREENAWAY.’

I was very, very sorry when this gentle soul faded from earth, and greatly treasure the many little mementoes—birthday, Christmas cards, and the like—which she sent me. Many of far lesser artistic attainments than she have been lauded as being possessed of serious talent, though fine judges of art, like the French, were not slow to express their admiration of her work.

Sir Frederick Leighton once told me how greatly he was struck by the beauties of her small drawings, entreating me at the same time to impress upon her the extreme importance of never for a moment abandoning the especial style which she had created, and of which she was a perfect mistress.

Ruskin also had a great appreciation of Miss Greenaway's talents, and was a constant correspondent of hers ; as a matter of fact, I have good reason to believe that at one time the great art critic in question would not have been at all adverse to marrying her had she felt disposed to think favourably of such an alliance.

She deliberately, and I think rightly, adhered to a very modest form of art, but, supreme in her own line, I do not think anyone will ever approach the daintiness and grace with which she limned boys

and girls of Georgian times; indeed, she was the creator of a type—the Greenaway child.

Another very talented female artist, of whom the world never heard anything at all, was my old and dearly-loved governess, Miss Eliza Redgrave, one of a most artistic and cultured family, and a sister of Richard Redgrave, R.A.

This lady was an extremely fine artist in water-colours, though her retiring disposition prevented her from attempting to secure any public appreciation of her artistic gifts. I still possess two volumes of a tour we made on the Continent, which are charmingly illustrated by her. Alas! another beautiful book, also her work, together with many more of our possessions, came to an untimely end in the great fire at the Pantechnicon, where one of my brothers had insisted upon depositing a great portion of the artistic treasures of our family. There perished a catalogue of the contents of Wolterton Hall, elaborately and beautifully illustrated by Miss Redgrave on the lines of another unique work in our possession—a description of Strawberry Hill in the time of Horace Walpole, which also came to destruction in the same catastrophe. In this fire, amongst other pictures, we lost Nelson's picture by Lane and a hunting scene by Wootton, representing Sir Robert Walpole with his hounds and the tame magpie which was wont to follow them into the field. It was the extreme care which had been taken to keep the Pantechnicon free from damp that caused the building to fall such an easy prey to the devouring flames, which speedily destroyed so much valuable property, and a peculiar system of corridors and passages also,

I believe, greatly facilitated its utter destruction. The Pantechnicon was supposed to be such a safe place for storing valuables that people having plenty of spare room in their own houses nevertheless preferred to send anything of especial worth to be taken care of there, reposing, indeed, an entire and, as it proved, unjustifiable confidence in the safety of this vast storehouse, which came to such a sudden and unfortunate end.

Miss Redgrave, besides being an artist of quite exceptional powers, possessed a charming literary style, as the account of our foreign tour, of which I have before made mention, testifies. She was a woman of great cultivation, besides being possessed of a certain distinction of mind which, I think, the modern so-called higher education is unable to give. Supremely modest as to her own artistic attainments, this lady, had she cared to court publicity, might have gained a considerable reputation as the gifted water-colour artist which she undoubtedly was. Her tender care and companionship—in childhood a preceptress, in after-life a much-loved friend—I have always felt to have been an inestimable boon, for thus was implanted in my mind a love of the artistic and the beautiful which during my life has proved a certain and ever-present source of delight.

Since the days of my youth the public taste in artistic matters has certainly improved, and whilst the increase of real knowledge may be but slight, there has arisen an excellent spirit which resents any senseless interference with the monuments of the past. The artistic crimes which were perpetrated under the name of 'restoration' are to-day,

indeed, almost universally condemned, though a certain unenlightened portion of the clergy still occasionally contrive to vulgarize old churches in out-of-the-way parts of the country. Fortunately, however, the very admirable Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings keeps a vigilant watch all over England, and does its best to prevent all contemplated atrocities, whilst furnishing free advice as to the best method of repairing (not restoring) any ancient edifice which is really in a ruinous condition. This society also recommends a most efficient and artistic architect to all desiring to preserve any monument of antiquity either public or private.

A very triumph of vandalism occurred in connection with the Winchester College Chapel, which was a good many years ago stripped by the authorities of its beautiful Grinling Gibbons paneling, modern Gothic woodwork, elaborately enriched with the usual embellishments so dear to the heart of the restorer, being put up in its place. When this was done, it was at first proposed that the discarded panelling, being old and of restrained, dignified, and simple appearance, should be treated as lumber and burnt; but eventually a small offer (I think about forty pounds) was accepted for it. This panelling subsequently passed through several hands, and was a short time back sold for several thousands of pounds to Sir George Cooper, of Hursley Park, not very far from Winchester, who with great good taste, I am told, has arranged a special hall in which it has been erected with excellent effect; and pleasant is it indeed to think that

this beautiful woodwork is now probably for ever safe from the hands of ecclesiastical vandals.

Occasionally, of course, restoration is carried out with a happy result. I know of such a case in Dorsetshire, where Mr. A. de Lafontaine has restored Athelhampton Hall* in a manner absolutely beyond all praise. Within recent years I have paid several very enjoyable visits to this old house, which I knew long years ago when I was a child, at which time Athelhampton was always pronounced ‘Admiston.’ It was then in the most ruinous condition, with grass and weeds coming up to the very doors, whilst no care whatever was bestowed upon the fabric. In 1862, indeed, the venerable gate-house was pulled down, and there seemed every likelihood that the main building also would go to utter ruin and decay. However, since the gentleman whom I have named has entered into possession, everything possible has been done to restore the house to its pristine condition, whilst great and discriminating reverence has been shown for all vestiges of antiquity worthy of preservation. The result is excellent, and all that now remains to be done is the rebuilding of the old gate-house, which I so well remember seeing in my early youth. The stone mullions have happily been preserved, and there is reason to believe that before very long this re-erection will take place, and the house once more present the same appearance as is shown in Nash’s ‘Mansions of England.’

* Athelhampton is described by Sir Frederick Treves in his delightful book on Dorsetshire, as ‘without question the most picturesque house in the county.’

CHAPTER XVIII

Recollections of theatrical celebrities—Taglioni at a party—Mr. and Mrs. Wigan—Sir Henry Irving and Mr. Toole—Miss Terry—The Bancrofts—The late Mr. Haweis and his unconventionality—M. Renan—Madame Duclaux—Two learned men—Sir Henry Thompson and his octaves.

My recollections of theatrical celebrities go back a very long way. I saw Cerito and Taglioni dance, and also once met the latter at some party, though where it was or how she contrived to get there I cannot remember. Mr. and Mrs. Wigan were personal friends of mine; indeed, I never in the slightest degree had any prejudice against the stage.

Sir Henry Irving was often a guest at my luncheon-table; a very prince amongst actors, his death came as a sad shock to me. I believe that in the theatrical world his generosity and good-nature were absolutely unbounded. He would, I have been told, insist upon invalid or aged members of his companies drawing full salaries when they could not in reality ever hope to resume the parts which infirmity had obliged them to abandon. His charity was boundless, but, alas! I fear, indiscriminate, for Irving was not the man to investigate distress once his sympathy was aroused—he preferred to relieve it, and so it came about that, in spite of the very large

sums he made, this great actor was never a rich man. He often used to invite me to his first nights, the pleasant recollection of which I still cherish. After the performance had concluded on these occasions, a supper used to be given on the stage, at which one was sure to meet a number of interesting people.

Some of these suppers were of the most luxurious description, everything most beautifully done, whilst singers and musicians made the moments glide swiftly away. The stage on which these feasts were given was brilliantly illuminated, and the weird light emitted by the footlights, together with the profound darkness of the auditorium, produced a very striking and impressive effect ; indeed, the whole scene reminded one of some Eastern festival, such as might have been given in the now deserted halls of Persepolis.

The last letter I ever received from poor Sir Henry was an invitation to go and see a piece which he knew to be one that I especially liked. He wrote :

‘ 17, STRATTON STREET,
‘ PICCADILLY, W.,
‘ *June 9, 1905.*

‘ **MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,**

‘ You said you would like to see old Gregory on Thursday morning.

‘ It will delight him to know that you are present —if you can find it convenient to come.

‘ Believe me,

‘ Dear Lady Dorothy,

‘ Sincerely yours,

‘ HENRY IRVING.’

I went and witnessed the play with the greatest enjoyment, little thinking that I should never see the great actor again. After all, death perhaps came to him much as he might have chosen ; better the sudden break with life than the retirement from active work which must inevitably have come, and which, I am certain, would have been a sad existence, wearisome and galling to that keen and energetic mind, so used to constantly exercising its splendid abilities.

By the strange irony of fate poor Mr. Toole, notwithstanding his terrible infirmity, survived his friend. I knew the kindly comedian well, and was also much attracted to his daughter, who, poor girl, died when quite young several years ago.

My recollections of the stage extend a very long way back, but amongst all of those whom I have seen treading the boards one figure stands strikingly out. I refer to Miss Ellen Terry, for whose exquisite art I have always entertained the greatest admiration. There is a subtle charm attached to her delightful personality which eludes definition ; she has but to appear upon the stage to thoroughly rivet the attention of an audience, and seems to be possessed of some mesmeric power of fascination, which, indeed, she carries into private life also.

Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft have been friends of mine for many years, and the vivacious sallies and musical laughter of the latter has often enlivened my luncheon-parties. Sir Squire, who is always so ready to assist any charitable cause, was most kind to me in giving a reading which largely increased the fund for a cot in the Ormond Street Hospital

for children—a memorial to my friend Miss Kate Greenaway. Many considerable sums of money have flowed into the coffers of different charities owing to his generous efforts on their behalf. He is a true philanthropist, ever ready to exercise the elocutionary art of which he is such a master in order to benefit any deserving cause.

Another delightful man, both socially and in his profession, is Sir Charles Wyndham, whom heaven seems to have dowered with perennial youth, a precious gift also seemingly bestowed upon Mr. Kendal. Amongst the younger school of actors, Mr. Beerbohm Tree and Mr. George Alexander count me a sincere unit of that great multitude which admires their conscientious art, as do that talented couple Mr. and Mrs. Cyril Maude.

At one time I saw a good deal of the Rev. Mr. Haweis, at whose parties one used to meet all sorts of different kinds of people; at one of these it was that I first met General Booth, with whose untiring philanthropic labours, I may add, I have the warmest sympathy. At another party was given what I think was the first semipublic demonstration of the phonograph, which had then just been invented. I remember its being a complete failure, for through something having gone wrong no coherent sound whatever issued from the mouthpiece, much to the dismay of the exhibitor.

Mr. Haweis was a most amusing little man, very devoted to music. His sermons were quite unlike any others I ever heard, and were totally devoid of those ponderous and didactic qualities which render these discourses a sad trial to many an unfortunate

congregation. He would preach on all sorts of unconventional subjects. One of his last sermons, I remember, was about cruelty to animals and the inhumanity of leaving unfortunate cats untended in London houses during the time that their owners were absent in the country. Some remarks which he added arousing unmistakable sounds of tittering amongst his congregation, he exclaimed : ‘ What I have just said may possibly be amusing, but I will tell you one thing, it certainly would not make a cat laugh !’

A great authority on musical instruments, he was especially learned about bells, and knew all about the manner in which they were cast. I wished to have a bell set up at the entrance to my garden in the country, and he gave me the address of an excellent bell-founder at Louvain—Severin Van Aerschoots, I think the name was. Mr. Haweis composed a motto to be inscribed on this bell, which ran :

‘ “ Nevile velis ”—as I swing,
“ Ne velis vile ”—so I sing,
Welcome to all, nor wish them ill,
My Lady Dorothy Nevill.’

This bell, of excellent sound and tone, was duly cast by the *fondeur des cloches* whom I have mentioned, and became an object of great interest in my Sussex garden.

Besides this, Mr. Haweis also designed a sundial for me, but this I never had made. The lines he wrote were very appropriate and original, and as they have never been utilized for the purpose for which they were written, I give them here, in the

hope that someone who desires an inscription for a sundial may carry out the original idea.

At the four corners of the dial without the circle the following lines were to be inscribed, a line in each corner :

'Look you upon my face without the sun,
I shall not mark the course that he has run ;
So let the dark days unrecorded be,
But number every glowing hour like me.'

Mr. Haweis never recovered his wife's death, which, I think, really broke his heart, for he did not survive that sad event very long, dying quite suddenly one Sunday.

A man of very broad (some people said unorthodox) views, he created something of a sensation by entertaining Renan when that great Frenchman was over here. I went to a party given in his honour at the Amber House, where Mr. Haweis lived, the exterior of which, in accordance with his unconventional nature, he had caused to be painted a bright amber colour. I afterwards went to see Renan alone, and that profound thinker was very nice to me, granting my request that he would write his name in my birthday-book. He wrote : 'Vouloir ce que Dieu veut est la seule science qui nous met en repos.'

—ERNEST RENAN.'

M. Renan and I had a great mutual friend, Madame Darmstetter (Mary F. Robinson, to-day Madame Duclaux), one of the most delightful women I ever knew, and possessed of great poetic and literary gifts. Amongst other works she has written an excellent biography of the author of the 'Vie de

Jésus.' Her husband, M. Darmstetter, was a man of immense learning—a philologist of quite extraordinary distinction, as may be gathered from the fact that, having studied the Afghan language in Paris, he was able, when afterwards in Afghanistan, to understand and translate the folk-songs in different dialects of the inhabitants of that wild country. A prodigious worker, he died, as one may say, a brave soldier on the field of battle, for one day, whilst studying at his desk, the spirit of life of a sudden fled from him, and he was found dead, his head resting upon his beloved books. Alas! the true devotees of science and learning have often to pay a heavy penalty for their devotion. Such a one was my poor friend Mr. H. N. Moseley, whose labours in the cause of science undoubtedly caused his death in the very flower of life; he had accompanied the *Challenger* expedition as naturalist, doing splendid work. At the time that the illness which caused his death seized him he was Linacre Professor of Human and Comparative Anatomy in the University of Oxford, and a very distinguished future appeared to be before him.

Sir Henry Thompson I knew well for very many years, and a very cultivated man he was! It was his custom to give little dinners of eight people only, which he called octaves. The guests on these occasions were invariably chosen on account of their conversational powers, and an invitation was naturally regarded as a sort of hall-mark of intellectual merit. Alas! I never went, and never could have gone, for there was an insuperable objection—I was not a man. As Sir Henry told me one day when I was saying

how much I envied those privileged to attend his carefully-arranged feasts : 'Well, if you want to come you must put on trousers ; I allow no petticoats at my octaves.' A great authority on food and cookery, he was very particular about his diet, and used, when travelling abroad, to take with him hermetically-sealed tins containing a special sort of rusk, which he ate in the place of bread. To the end of his life his interest in everything, especially art and literature, remained active and keen ; indeed, he himself was a writer of considerable merit, and, besides the scientific works which he wrote as a specialist, gave proof that had he devoted himself to fiction he would have occupied no insignificant place as a novelist. He wrote under the nom de plume of Pen Oliver, and illustrated his own books ; for, in addition to being an author, he was something of an artist as well.

Sir Henry Thompson it was who performed the operation on Napoleon III., as a result of which that unfortunate Emperor died, and I believe it is actually a fact that the distinguished surgeon (who, of course, had done everything possible, and was in no way to blame) received a warm letter of thanks from a Red Republican 'in return for his services to humanity in having so ably made away with a tyrant.'

Almost the last thing I remember about Sir Henry Thompson was his telling me that he had sustained himself during the ceremony of the Coronation with a Plasmon biscuit, which he had contrived to secrete. He was enthusiastic about motors, and, indeed, it was immediately after a drive in one of them that he was

taken ill and died. I am glad to say that his son—I should say, the clever son of a clever father, though in a different line—is one of my friends. Sir Henry, indeed, was lucky in his children, with whom, in addition to the usual parental relations, there existed a great bond of artistic sympathy.

CHAPTER XIX

The haunted house in Berkeley Square—Its real story—A Buddha which disliked society and brought ill-luck—Mr. Frederick Myers—Handschuheim and its spectral warrior—A clever family.

No. 50, BERKELEY SQUARE used always to be known as the haunted house, and well do I recall the many strange stories which used to be told about it. One was, that a young maid-servant had gone mad on account of something dreadful which she had seen in one of the upper rooms; another, that a young man who had determined to solve the mystery had been found dead in a room into which he had locked himself. Strange noises, it was declared, were constantly heard at night by the neighbours, although the house appeared to be quite deserted; and it was also hinted that a gang of coiners carried on their nefarious operations in it, obtaining access by some secret means—in short, all sorts of reports were afloat.

Oddly enough, I ought to know something of this mysterious dwelling, for the occupier, at the time of these queer rumours, was, in a sort of way, related to me. He was a Mr. Myers, whose father had married a Lady Mary Nevill, daughter of Henry,

second Earl of Abergavenny. This marriage had, in its day, been very much resented by the Nevills, who considered it a great *mésalliance*, and during the life of Lady Mary's husband, and also of her son, the two families never spoke. After the latter's death, however, ;the hatchet was buried, and old Miss Myers, the last of the family, was on very good terms with all of us. I knew her well ; she was a quaint old-world figure, and was possessed of a very retiring disposition.

But to return to the haunted house ; the real cause of its weird reputation was this : Mr. Myers, the brother of the old lady, was exceedingly eccentric, to a degree which bordered upon lunacy. Many years ago he had taken 50, Berkeley Square, with the intention of living there with his wife, for at the time he was engaged to be married. He got the house, I believe, on very advantageous terms, as there was already some idea about that it was haunted. Be this as it may, he made every preparation to receive his bride in it—ordered furniture, carpets, pictures, china, everything—but a few days before the day fixed for the wedding the lady to whom he was engaged threw him over and married another man, which affected him so terribly as to shake his intelligence and render him exceedingly eccentric, if not worse. He did not give up the house, but remained there, leaving everything in exactly the same state as when he had heard the news which had ruined his life ; the furniture was left just as it had been moved in, whilst some of the carpets were not even unrolled, and remained for years tied up just as they had left the warehouse.

The whole house fell into a state of disorder and decay, nothing being ever done to it. During the day Mr. Myers (whose presence in the house was not believed in by the neighbours) remained quiescent, but at night-time he would fit about, rambling from room to room, producing in his nocturnal progress the weird sounds which occasioned so much gossip. Deserted and mournful by day, its windows black with the dust of years, the old house would occasionally appear to be lit up at the dead of night. No one was ever seen to go out of it, though coals and provisions were observed to be delivered to a servant whose reticence baffled all inquiry. As a matter of fact, I believe that Mr. Myers really did not leave the house at all for about twenty years; his sister, however, used very occasionally to pay him a visit, but when she did it was done in a manner to avoid attracting attention.

In course of time he died, and left everything to her. She sent a house agent to inspect the house, with a view to discovering whether it would be worth while putting it into thorough repair for the remainder of the lease. The agent afterwards declared that he had never seen anything like the dreadful state of dilapidation which prevailed—everything neglected and mouldering into dust—in fact, it seemed impossible that any human being could have lived in such a state of squalor and decay. This man, I was told, questioned the two old maid-servants he found in the house, saying, ‘Well, is it true that strange things happen here and odd noises can be heard?’ In reply, they denied ever having heard anything at all, and when he further inquired, ‘Do

you never see ghosts ?' they burst into a laugh, saying, ' We never see'd none.'

As I have said, I got on very well with old Miss Myers, and used often to see her, and one day I could not help expressing my curiosity as to whether any mystery really existed about the house. I got nothing out of her, however, except a rather curt reply, for it was not at all a subject on which she cared to be communicative. People were constantly ringing up the servants in charge of it, asking whether there was any possibility of obtaining permission to pass a night in the haunted room, or whether anything had lately been seen of the ghost. After a time the house was thoroughly renovated, and, I think, an additional story added to it. Its contents had long been disposed of, many family relics eventually returning to the Nevills after Miss Myers' death, as the bulk of her property went to Lord Abergavenny.

Of late years nothing more has been heard of the haunted house in Berkeley Square, which now, for a long time, has assumed a thoroughly normal and cheerful appearance, very different to the woebegone aspect it used to bear when occupied by its former eccentric owner. Well is it that the stupid legend should be forgotten, and if I have mentioned it here it is solely for the purpose of recording my conviction that the whole story was nonsense, originating only from the circumstances I have described.

Though I am not by any means particularly superstitious, some occurrences which once took place in my own house really did cause me alarm. A great friend of mine had presented me with a

most lovely gift, a Bambino, or Holy Child, carved out of ivory. It came, I believe, from Burmah, and the face was that of a Buddha ; on its head was a crown of gold, and there were also rings upon its fingers.

This Bambino lay upon a beautiful miniature four-poster bed, and all around it hung Neapolitan and Burmese charms. The little figure, indeed, seemed as if it might be as sacred to a Buddhist as to a Christian. It had been brought by missionaries from Burmah, where it had been worshipped as the infant Buddha, to Naples, and had there become an object of veneration to Catholics. There was something very fascinating and striking about this Bambino which could not fail to rivet the attention, and, delighted to receive such a unique gift, I at once gave the glass case which contained it the place of honour in my drawing-room. There it lay, dignified and peaceful to all outward appearance, but in reality, as we subsequently discovered, anything but pleased at finding itself amidst such incongruous surroundings.

From the day the Buddha entered my house everything went amiss. As a matter of fact, I do not believe it hated me as much as it did my family, though eventually it did not forget to give me a very startling manifestation of its displeasure. Its installation in the drawing-room was soon followed by a perfect avalanche of catastrophes. Within a week, to begin with, a son of mine in the City wrote informing me that he had of late met with nothing but bad luck, everything having gone wrong ; several of his best clients had died, whilst others had either

left England or for the time being given up doing any business.

A day or two later my daughter was walking in Berkeley Square with her dog, to which she was very devoted, when a collie deliberately stalked up, took it between its teeth, shook it like a rabbit, then, leaving it on the ground dead, trotted off before the tragedy had been thoroughly realized. In addition to this, one of her ponies was suddenly paralyzed in its stable, and this on the very eve of an election, in which she was most anxious to help by conveying Conservative voters to the poll.

Disaster now followed disaster, my other sons writing to say that a strange vein of ill-luck had suddenly begun to pursue them; indeed, a black cloud seemed to have settled over the whole family. Then it was that someone suggested that perhaps the Buddha was unlucky, his feelings being outraged at his frivolous surroundings, for Buddhas were not used to drawing-rooms. I was even advised to propitiate the little image by putting lotus-leaves before it; but where could they be got? I do not believe that lotus-leaves are to be procured in London, not even in Covent Garden Market, and as a substitute might have made the little image even more angry than it was, I decided to do nothing; besides, I rather scouted the idea that it was the Buddha which was bringing bad luck. My opinion, however, changed when, a few days later, an immense chimney, constructed of the most solid masonry, came down with a crash upon a projecting wing at the back of my house, and carried away several water-tanks and three-quarters of the bath-

room, as well as doing a great deal of other damage in the way of broken windows and the like. There was no reason why the chimney in question should have selected my house to come down upon, and it seemed as if this fall had been a deliberate choice.

I now seriously began to think that the Buddha would be better somewhere else than with me, for it seemed evident that his present quarters were anything but to his liking, and so I set about pondering as to what could be done. I did not wish to give the image away ; in the first place, it might offend my friend who had presented it to me, and, in the second, such action might entail the ruin of the innocent recipient, while to sell Buddha was, of course, out of the question. At last I hit upon a solution, which was to place it in the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington, and with this design in view I proceeded to apply to a friend of mine who at that time presided over the destinies of the institution in question.

This was Sir Purdon Clarke, ever to me the most accommodating and obliging of men. In the matter of the Buddha, however, he said he could not assist me, there being no chance of the little deity being admitted into the Museum. I believe that the regulations really did prohibit the admission of such an exhibit ; but even had they not done so, I don't think Sir Purdon would have taken it, for I had incautiously detailed the catalogue of misfortunes which had occurred to us since its advent, and he naturally had no wish to admit such an uncertain-tempered occupant into galleries which it might have wrecked.

At the same time he suggested a solution, which was to take the Buddha to the Indian Museum, where the authorities would be delighted to take care of it for me ; this I accordingly did, and it was agreed that the little god should be given a place as a loan exhibit. I must add that I said nothing about its temper, as Sir Purdon had warned me not to mention anything of my misfortunes, lest it should reach the ears of the Italian workmen, many of whom were employed about the place ; these men, said he, were exceedingly superstitious, and would bitterly resent the advent of such an irascible visitor.

Since then I have not made any inquiries about the Buddha, which is still at the Indian Museum, but I heard rumours some little time after its arrival that things were not going well ; I believe the Italian workmen did strike, whilst some other unfortunate occurrences took place. However, for many years I have heard of no further disasters, and so have good reason for thinking that the wrath of this exile from a far country is at length appeased.

I was told of a mummy which, having been presented to the British Museum, behaved much in the same way as did my Buddha. When this mummy was being carried in, the men who bore it tumbled over, one of them breaking a limb, whilst misfortune after misfortune happened in the particular section where the new arrival was placed. Eventually, however, the irate arrival was placated, for, it being discovered that it, or rather she, was an Egyptian Queen, someone made the suggestion that perhaps irritation at not being accorded royal

honours was the cause of all the disasters which had occurred since her advent, and accordingly she was placed in a case containing the mummy of another Egyptian Queen, one who had been a monarch of especial note and power. Immediately this had been done everything went right again, the outraged feelings of the sensitive though mummified ruler being apparently mollified by such a mark of respect.

It was during one of many charming visits to an excessively cultured and philanthropic friend of mine—Lady Battersea—at Overstrand, near Cromer, that I first made the acquaintance of that picturesque and striking personality Mr. Frederick Myers. Devoted to psychical research, he was much interested in certain ghostly manifestations which were supposed to occur at an old house in Germany, at which I have passed many pleasant days.

This delightful old château is in the village of Handschuheim, a suburb of Heidelberg, and dates from the time of Charlemagne. It was originally a convent, and is separated from the village by a high wall enclosing a lovely garden full of old fruit-trees—in the late summer a very garden of Eden, so beautiful were the surroundings.

Not far from the château itself is another building, a *dépendance* older even than the main edifice, which bears the reputation of being haunted amongst the villagers.

The father of Mr. Graham, the present owner, on buying this place, decided to pull down a party-wall, and thus enlarge the annexe by throwing two rooms into one; and this being done, the workmen engaged

in demolishing a thick partition came upon the skeleton of a warrior fully equipped in armour of an earlier period than the time of the Thirty Years' War. On his helmet was a great dent, but in other respects the suit of armour was quite undamaged and entire—just opposite the mouth traces of a former opening in the wall were visible, evidently the aperture through which the unfortunate prisoner had been (for a time at least) fed; at the feet was a large stain—the blood which had for so many years been uneffaced. Local tradition declares that the spirit of the imprisoned warrior still haunts the scene of his terrible captivity, and there is no one for miles round who will ever venture near the place after dark, for it is said that this unquiet spirit is wont to walk in the early morning just after dawn. Most certainly I myself have heard the sounds of heavy footsteps in this *dépendance*, when happening to be awake at such an hour.

During the Franco-Prussian War, when troops were billeted upon the inhabitants of Handschuheim, two or three officers were allotted quarters in this annexe to the château, and the one who slept in the room where the warrior had been immured declared, after his first night in it, that he had heard such sounds and seen such sights that nothing on earth would tempt him to sleep in that room again. Without doubt there was something mysterious about the old place, for I remember during our visit that one very stormy evening several of us went out into the garden to find out if the rain had ceased, when our eyes were attracted to the *dépendance*, the windows of which could be seen through

the dark blazing with illumination, and it astonished us the more as, owing to its ghostly reputation, it was notoriously avoided by everyone after nightfall.

The evidences of the ghastly discovery made by the workmen are still in existence. Whilst Mr. Graham possesses the helmet, the rest of the armour was acquired by the local authorities as treasure-trove. Mr. Myers was much interested in the whole story, and resolved, if possible, to make a thorough investigation, paid a visit to Mr. Graham at his German home. Obtaining his host's cordial assent, he installed himself in the *dépendance*, and proceeded to sit up the whole of one night awaiting the appearance of the spectral warrior ; but maybe the light, which he kept burning was not congenial to the grim visitant in question, for certain is it that he neither heard or saw anything of an uncanny nature, but was obliged to depart from Handschuheim leaving the mystery still unsolved.

The late Mr. Augustus Hare used to be well known for his ghost stories, which he told in a particularly weird and impressive manner.

One of the best ghost stories I ever read was written by a young lady when only fifteen years of age. It was called ‘The Red Manor,’ and the authoress was Lady Betty Lytton, now Lady Betty Balfour. The copy I have was privately printed, the story being afterwards, I believe, published in a magazine ; certainly it well deserved more general recognition than private circulation could give it. The writer came of a very clever family on both sides, for her father, the late Lord Lytton, besides being an admirable administrator and skilled diplo-

matist, was a poet of no mean merit and possessed great literary gifts, whilst her aunt, Mrs. Earle, has within the last few years given us some delightful books, in which, in addition to much pleasant disquisition about her garden, a quantity of useful information is most agreeably and cleverly conveyed.

CHAPTER XX

Mr. Cotter Morison—My friend Mr. Frederic Harrison and his hatred of war—A charming writer—Sutton Place and its present possessor—Tennyson and his forgotten road—Thackeray in society—My blunder—Mr. Edmund Gosse—His literary powers—Frederick Locker—Mr. Alfred Austin—A dedication by Austin Dobson—A genial personality—‘Toby, M.P.’—Mr. John Morley.

MR. JAMES COTTER MORISON, a thinker of noble intelligence, was a friend of mine whose memory will always linger in my mind. A confirmed Positivist (he preceded my good friend Mr. Frederic Harrison as chief of the English Positivists), Mr. Morison's life was one at which not even the most stern religious bigot could cavil, for though constantly oppressed by ill-health, he bore his lot with a stoicism—nay, a very contentment—which a Christian saint might envy. A fine writer, he produced but two books of serious importance, ‘The Life of Saint Theresa’ and ‘The Service of Man.’ The latter of the two, composed whilst the author was seriously ill, is one of the most thoughtful works ever written. It is to be regretted that ill-health prevented the author from carrying it to its proper conclusion with the discussion of some urgent social and economical questions which, growing in importance in 1887,

when the ‘Service of Man’ was written, have to-day become acute. A passage in the Preface is, at the present time, especially worthy of consideration :

‘Some persons in England, and many abroad, believe that these evils are traceable to Free Trade, and recommend Protection or Fair Trade as a remedy. It were much to be wished that so simple a cure were possible ; for the threatened evils are so great that it is not a time to be punctilious on economic or any theories. The difficulty is to show how the exclusion of foreign goods here would tend to force the purchase of our goods by foreigners ; for *that* is what a revival of trade means. We may keep out the foreigner as much as we like, but would he much care ? Could any form of retaliatory tariff enable us to dispense with corn, cotton, wool, wine, tobacco, silk, etc., purchased from abroad or from our own colonies ? We want to sell ; refusing to buy is no remedy if our old customers are churlish, or, for reasons of their own, indifferent to our wares. On the other hand, the evidence is very far from being in favour of Protection, even in the countries which still maintain it.

‘One could wish, indeed, that it was less clear than it is—that the evils under which modern industry is suffering were of so slight a nature as a reform of tariffs or any fiscal or economic change could remove. We could bear our woes with a more patient mind if all depended on the “bugbear” of Free Trade being promptly exploded. We have no such consolation. The root of the mischief lies deeper : in the exorbitant over-production made possible by the marvellous improvement of machinery,

and in the increased facility thereby of dispensing with manual labour.'

Of the future Mr. Morison took a gloomy view. He said: 'I believe we are approaching a great catastrophe in our industrial system, which will be a calamity without precedent since the Black Death of the fourteenth century.'

He was a warm admirer of Mr. John Morley, as a letter written in 1887 will show:

'BRISTOL HOTEL, BRIGHTON,
'December 6, 1887.

'DEAR LADY DOROTHY NEVILL,

'Ever since I saw you I have been laid up and confined to the house, the bed, or the sofa. A severe cold, ending in bronchitis, has been my complaint, and I have been brought very low indeed. I trouble you with these details in order to excuse myself for not having written before. I hope when I return to London to make an early call, and offer you a choice of days when it might suit you to meet Frederic Harrison and a few friends.

'Did you read Morley's admirable lecture on Aphorisms? What fertility of mind he has! It will soon be thirty-one years since we became friends at Oxford, and my faith in his genius has never wavered in all the time intervening. His has been a wonderful career, very imperfectly known and appreciated by the public. I heard, not long ago, from friends at Florence that Miss Paget was looking radiant.

'Believe me,

'Very truly yours,

'JAS. COTTER MORISON.'

Mr. Morison had a particular liking for using swan-quills as pens, and I was able to be of some small use to him by procuring the kind of quill most suitable. I fancy that his works are little, if at all, known to the general public ; indeed, they were, I think, rather too thoughtful to attract it. An aristocrat of letters, Mr. Morison set forth, with the utmost moderation, views which he himself must have known had little chance of being accepted in the country of his birth. Nevertheless, the intelligent reader of the ‘Service of Man,’ however much he may differ from the writer and dislike his opinions, cannot fail to admit that there is much to ponder over, much to learn from the dignified prose of its pages—the work, indeed, of a noble mind. I am proud to have known this thinker, and here take the opportunity of paying a last tribute of admiration and respect to his memory.

A very admirable eulogium of Mr. Cotter Morison was delivered to the Positivist Society by his friend, Mr. Frederic Harrison, another clever and cultivated man, who possesses a mind which, in this era of superficiality and indifference to lofty intellectual thought, stands conspicuously alone. With some of his political views many may disagree, but there is no denying his fearless sincerity or the moral justification of certain views of which he is such an admirable advocate. An uncompromising opponent of the South African War, he often poured out his horror over the whole lamentable affair to me ; indeed, so disgusted was he at the time of this struggle as to once declare that he thought seriously of buying a small property in Ireland, the country

of his grandfather, and retiring altogether from this island, which seemed to him a fountain-head of iniquity, and, further, went so far as to say that life had no further attractions for him, as he did not wish to survive the ‘material and moral ruin of his country.’

I was not myself over-enthusiastic about the war in question, but, nevertheless, I suppose that, sooner or later, some sort of a conflict was bound to have come. Before I had made the acquaintance of Mr. Harrison I had always much appreciated his writings, and my introduction to him at a dinner-party, some eighteen years ago, laid the foundations of a friendship which has endured ever since ; indeed, I do not believe that this philosophical and erudite writer numbers amongst his numerous admirers anyone more ardent than myself.

A very charming book by Mr. Harrison is ‘Annals of an Old Manor-House—Sutton Place, Surrey,’ now the home of Lord Northcliffe, who, I am bound to say, has done everything for this venerable memorial of another age which good taste and judicious respect for antiquity can render it possible to do. During a recent visit I was most pleasantly astonished to perceive the clever manner in which great material comfort had been achieved without in any way impairing the delightful old-world air which clings around this ancient manor-house, in which both my courteous host and his wife seemed to me to take an almost caressing as well as cultured interest.

Literary people have always greatly attracted me. Amongst many whom I have known I particularly remember Matthew Arnold, Walter Pater, Froude,

Hepworth Dixon (now, I fancy, almost forgotten), and Ouida, whilst I must not forget that brilliant writer over whom I think it is best to believe that a dark cloud of insanity settled—I mean Oscar Wilde. He it was who obtained Zola's autograph for my birthday-book, on which occasion he wrote me the following letter :

‘29, BOULEVARD DES CAPUCINES,
PARIS.

‘MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘I would have answered your charming letter before, but the death of poor dear Lytton has quite upset me. We had become during the last year very great friends, and I had seen him only a few days before he died, lying in Pauline Borghese’s lovely room at the Embassy, and full of charm and grace and tenderness.

‘His funeral, in spite of the hideous Protestant service, was most impressive ; the purple-covered bier with its one laurel wreath being a solemn note of colour and sadness in the midst of the gorgeous uniforms of the Ambassadors.

‘He was a man of real artistic temperament. I had grown to be very fond of him, and he was most kind always to me.

‘By all means send your book : I will get Zola’s name. Poor Maupassant is dying, I fear.

‘Believe me, dear Lady Dorothy,

‘Sincerely yours,

‘OSCAR WILDE.’

Lord Houghton I knew well, and he it was who took me to see Tennyson. Indirectly I was the

means of preventing that poet from being in a sort of way imprisoned in his own house, which, with the characteristic insouciance of genius, he had built on a hill near Haslemere, and from which there was no direct communication by carriage-road with the surrounding neighbourhood. Under these sad circumstances I approached the Lord Egmont of the day, a great friend of mine, to whom the property in the immediate vicinity belonged, and he accorded his permission for the desired road to be made up to the poet's domain. Had this not been done, the unfortunate bard would have had to have gone six miles round in order to reach the outer world.

Thackeray I occasionally met in society, and I remember perpetrating a dreadful blunder during a dinner at which he was one of the guests. As luck would have it, I chanced to be placed next a Mr. Venables, to whom I had only been introduced that evening. He seemed a pleasant man, and we were soon engaged in an agreeable conversation, which eventually turned upon the great satirist sitting some little distance away, with whom I observed my neighbour appeared to be well acquainted. Thinking that this was a good opportunity of clearing up a point about which at that time I was completely ignorant, I asked him: 'Perhaps you can tell me whether the malformation of Mr. Thackeray's nose is natural or the result of an accident?' To my great surprise, Mr. Venables seemed very much upset by my question, stammering out, 'It was injured in an accident at school.' I could not understand his confusion, but, asking someone its reason after dinner, fully realized what

an unfortunate question I had asked, when I learnt that it was Mr. Venables who, as a boy at school, had broken Thackeray's nose in a fight.

In society Thackeray was not nearly such a brilliant talker as Charles Lever, who was the life and soul of any party—joyous, good-humoured, and unrestrained. Thackeray, on the other hand, was inclined to be satiric and severe. On one occasion I recollect his administering a terrible verbal castigation to an unfortunate individual who had incurred his displeasure, and ever after I was rather afraid of him.

A literary man of the present day for whose talents I have always entertained feelings of the greatest admiration is Mr. Edmund Gosse.

The gifted son of a naturalist of great distinction and ability, there are very few who possess Mr. Gosse's power of blending, as it were, poetry with prose. I had always wished to make his acquaintance years before I actually did so, for the remembrance of his father's great mental attainments lingered in my memory, and these, as I had anticipated, I found once again in the delightful writer and critic, to whose visits I always look forward with so much pleasure. A few years ago Mr. Gosse did me an honour, of which I was quite unworthy, in the dedication of his romance, '*The Secret of Nar-cisse*', a charming tale of sixteenth-century life at Bar-le-Duc.

By no means a recluse, Mr. Gosse indeed combines the best attributes of a man of letters with great social charm.

Another great friend of mine is that clever

novelist, Miss Braddon (Mrs. Maxwell), an exceptional woman, whose son, already the writer of two very successful books, seems to be on the threshold of a brilliant literary career.

In former days I used to see a good deal of Mr. Frederick Locker, whose delicate verse had an especial charm for me, and I still treasure a copy of '*London Lyrics*' which he presented to me, inscribed with the too flattering dedication :

‘The Muse I woo’d was fair and true,
And all her charms I find in you.’

Mr. Locker was fond of owls, and always kept some of these solemn birds at his house at Rowfant in Sussex, to which I have paid many pleasant visits. Often would we talk over old days and Lord Cantilupe, mentioned in '*Rotten Row*' :

‘But where is now the courtly troop
That once rode laughing by ?
I miss the curls of Cantilupe,
The laugh of Lady Di.’

I well remember the curls in question and their owner at Florence many, many years ago, in the early forties. Lord Cantilupe was, indeed, one of the very last of that race, now passed away, whose recognised mission in life was to be dandies.

It must have been about the middle of last century that Mr. Lear published his celebrated '*Book of Nonsense*', consisting of a collection of clever sketches with appropriate jingling rhymes, which not only commanded a widespread sale, but also inevitably called forth an endless series of (chiefly inferior) rhyming imitations, many of which derived their temporary importance from topics and personalities

of the day. One specimen of the kind, probably now generally forgotten, acquired a passing vogue by having for its subject Bishop Colenso (at that time in the full swing of his doctrinal controversies), and ran thus :

‘There was a queer Bishop of Natal,
To whom an objection proved fatal.
“You don’t,” said a Zulu,
“Believe that, you fool you?”
“Not at all,” said the Bishop of Natal.’

In old days I think more people dabbled in the writing of light verse than is now the case. I cannot say that I am particularly fond of modern poetry ; Pope and Dryden are my favourites. The present Poet-Laureate, however, in addition to verse, has written some delightful prose, which I have read with the greatest pleasure ; besides this, Mr. Alfred Austin is one of the best conversationalists I know. His cultivated erudition and wide knowledge of men and things (he went all through the Franco-German War) render him a most interesting companion.

Of the writings of Mr. Austin Dobson, that excellent chronicler of eighteenth-century life, I am especially fond, but bear their author one bitter grudge, which is that I have never been able to see enough of him. In 1893 Mr. Dobson wrote a memoir of my kinsman, Horace Walpole, which he sent to me with the following lines inscribed on the title-page :

‘TO LADY DOROTHY NEVILL.

‘Here is Horace, his life. I have ventured to draw him
As the Berrys, the Conways, the Montagus saw him—
Very kind to his friends, to the rest only so-so ;
A talker, fine gentleman, wit, virtuoso,

With running through all his sham Gothic gimerackery
A dash of Sevigné, Saint Simon, and Thackeray.
For errors of ignorance, haste, execution,
From you, his descendant, I ask absolution.'

AUSTIN DOBSON.

Mr. Dobson's last work has been the editing of an edition of the diary and letters of Madame d'Arblay, which, I need hardly add, like everything else to which he has devoted his talents, is excellently well done. His mind is a very storehouse of information about eighteenth-century life, and a chat with him is always a thing to which I look forward. Alas! the pity is that he has but little time to spare for such frivolities.

Mr. Lucy ('Toby, M.P.'), a most genial personality, is another literary man whom it is always a pleasure to meet, whilst the luncheon-parties which he occasionally gives are remarkable for the clever and agreeable people whom he there contrives to bring together.

Cast in a sterner and more severe mould is Mr. John Morley, whom I have known and respected for so many years, though I cannot say that I approve of his horrible political views. Some time ago he wrote a book about an ancestor of mine, 'Sir Robert Walpole,' which he most kindly sent to me with the remark, 'I believe that the whitewash on your Sir Robert is a good thick solid coat, which won't soon wear off,' adding in the same letter, with reference to a volume which he had forgotten to return: 'I am usually a paragon of virtue as to books, though your Tory friends may think me a monster of vice in everything else.'

CHAPTER XXI

Politicians in the eighties—Lord Randolph Churchill—The Primrose League and its origin—An anecdote of Cardinal Manning—My birthday book and Cardinal Newman—My lack of political prejudice—Lord Sherbrooke—Some letters and an epitaph—Lord and Lady Wolseley—Lady St. Helier—A picturesque figure—Sir Robert Peel—Hatfield—Lord and Lady Salisbury—The old Shah and his favourite—Lady Zetland's fiery chariot—Warwick Castle.

In the early eighties Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, and Mr. (now Sir John) Gorst used to lunch at my house almost every Sunday, and here it was that the first idea of the Primrose League originated. Lord Randolph, brilliant conversationalist as he was, used to be the life and soul of the party, unless there should chance to be anyone present whom he disliked, when he would hardly talk at all. This unhappy state of affairs, however, very seldom occurred, as I knew his particular antipathies pretty well, for he was in no way backward in concealing his likes and dislikes. I have many letters of his expressing terse opinions of certain people, and hoping he would not find himself meeting them. The following note will show what I mean :

‘ 2, CONNAUGHT PLACE, W.,
‘ February 27, 1886.

‘ DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘ I was looking forward to lunching with you to-morrow, but dear . . . is too much for me. How

can you have such a person? I fear our mutual friend Joe is being overwhelmed. He is ceasing to lead, and when you cease to lead you cease to influence.

‘Yours ever,

‘RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

Lord Randolph was very frank with me as to his views about people and things. I had known him for years, his mother, Fanny, Duchess of Marlborough, having been a very great friend of mine. I well remember the late Bishop Wilberforce predicting to the Duchess and myself the brilliant future which lay before her son—a prediction fully verified by Lord Randolph’s brilliant, but all too short, career. However, the subject has been so fully treated by his son that to say more would be quite superfluous here. Well do I remember Mr. Winston Churchill and his brother coming down just before dinner at Connaught Place when the present King and Queen, then Prince and Princess of Wales, were dining there, and the Prince presenting each of the two children with a pretty pin. Lord Randolph, once he had thrown himself into the political fray, entirely gave himself up to politics, as his clever son does to-day. I can only hope that a quite exceptionally brilliant intelligence may not allow itself to be overtaxed; at present Mr. Winston Churchill’s energy appears to be quite unbounded.

Lord Randolph continued to be a pretty constant visitor at my Sunday lunches till he went to Africa. Before starting he wrote me:

' 2, CONNAUGHT PLACE, W.,
April 20, 1891.

' DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

' Many, many thanks for your good and amiable note. In Mashonaland on Sundays at two o'clock I shall think of you.

' Yours ever,

' RANDOLPH S. C.'

After his return from Africa I met him several times at Hatfield and other places, but he appeared to me to be in a strange state, and altogether a different man from the Randolph Churchill of the eighties. There were signs that the brilliant intelligence was clouded, and perhaps death, such being the case, came not unwelcomed by that once ardent and active spirit.

The Primrose League to-day may be with justice termed a great political organization. Little was it thought at the time when it was first started that it would attain such widespread influence.

As I have before mentioned, it in a way originated at my luncheon-table, at which on Sundays many leading lights of the more militant section of the Conservative party used to assemble, and here it was that Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Sir Algernon Borthwick (now Lord Glenesk) first conceived the idea of moulding into a compact body the more active and energetic partisans of the newer and more democratic school of Conservatism. At first the aspirations of these political enthusiasts did not aim at much more than founding a club of young and enterprising Conservatives, which, whilst re-

quiring adherence to the main principles of the party, would yet be of such a broad-minded nature as to enlist the sympathies of many who had hitherto looked upon Conservative associations as close corporations of landlords and parsons.

The first conception, however, of a league as distinct from a club was the idea of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, who, besides, suggested its being formed on a sort of masonic basis, with different grades, such as associates, councillors, and the like. Its first name was the Primrose Tory League.

An especial feature of the new League was its defence of religion. Embracing all religious denominations, it was in no way to favour any particular form of faith to the detriment of any other. In connection with this side of the League's work, I received a letter from the late Cardinal Manning who wrote me as follows :

‘ ARCHBISHOP’S HOUSE,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.,
‘ May 3, 1886.

‘ MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘ Many thanks for your note, which tells me what I did not want to know, and does not tell me what I do want to know.

‘ I know that Catholics are not excluded, but I have been informed that the Primrose League or its habitations or its members circulate anti-Catholic and Protestant fly-leaves.

‘ I am anxious to refute this, as I have staked my character on your being a League of Innocents.

‘ Believe me always,

‘ Yours very truly,

‘ H. E. CARD. ARCHEBISHOP.’

I need hardly say that I at once put the good Cardinal's mind at rest, the Primrose League being essentially, as I have said, a non-sectarian organization.

Cardinal Manning (to wander from my subject for a moment) was a man for whom, though not a Catholic myself, I always had the greatest reverence. Although, of course, he had prejudices, he surely was as near a saint as any mortal man can be. I often used to go and see him. When in the Church of England he had had a living quite close to us ; but upon this subject I never touched, as memories of his pre-Catholic days were not at all to his taste. Kind and benevolent, he could at times assume a sternness which seldom failed in effect ; I remember a lady, a friend of mine, kind-hearted and a pious Catholic, but fond of the little pleasures of the world, such as society and dinner-parties, going to the Cardinal with me and, in the course of conversation, bewailing the great poverty of the submerged classes, and her inability to assist them. ‘We can all help,’ said the Cardinal. ‘But what,’ said she, ‘can I do?’ ‘Do,’ said he, ‘do !—why, give fewer dinner-parties and more to the poor !’ which answer, very much to the point, though making her rather cross at the time, sent her home in a more thoughtful and contrite mood than usual.

Cardinal Newman I did not know, but I am ashamed to say that I was the cause of his being exposed to a visit from the police. I have a book containing the autographs of many celebrated people, and I was anxious to have the signature of the venerable Cardinal upon one of its pages. As

I have said, I did not know him, but with the somewhat unblushing audacity of the autograph writer, I took the bull by the horns, and boldly sent him the book, together with a note, begging that he would accede to my request and write his name in it. A considerable time elapsed, and, no answer arriving, I began to become alarmed, and eventually decided to apply to the Birmingham Post-Office with a view to discovering whether my treasured book had been lost. A few days after I received a letter from the Cardinal's secretary stating that detectives had paid a visit to the eminent ecclesiastic with a view to finding out whether he knew anything about a book sent to him some time ago by Lady Dorothy Nevill, and which they had reason to believe was being detained in his possession. The Cardinal, the letter went on to say, had calmed the instruments of the law by telling them what was the fact, namely, that he had signed his name in the book, and then locked it away in a drawer for safety, meaning to post it that evening. This, however, he had forgotten to do ; the book had now been despatched, and should reach me the next day. It duly arrived, and I wrote a letter of humble apology, receiving a kindly letter in reply.

An Irish Roman Catholic prelate, however, took quite a different view as to my passion for autograph collecting ; this was Archbishop Croke, who, being asked by a friend of mine to write his name in my little book, sternly refused, saying 'he wanted to have nothing to do with me or with my kind !'

But to return to the Primrose League. Dr. Bagshawe, R.C. Bishop of Nottingham at one

time, created a considerable sensation by denouncing it as a secret society. He was, however, very promptly answered by the Duke of Norfolk, who thoroughly demonstrated the absurdity and falsehood of such a statement. The denunciation acted as an excellent advertisement, and to-day a very large proportion of members are Roman Catholics, to which faith some of our most active and useful workers belong. Indeed, the present Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor (the Duke of Norfolk and Mr. George Lane-Fox) are both of the Roman faith.

The first habitation started was one for the Strand district, and the first great gathering of members took place at the Freemason's Tavern on Primrose Day, 1884, when an inaugural banquet was given. Things then began to go like wildfire, and from April to August the great difficulty was to keep pace with the large influx of members, and soon the two small rooms in Essex Street, Strand, which had served as offices, had to be exchanged for more commodious accommodation in Victoria Street. The first ruling Council consisted of Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir H. Drummond Wolff, Mr. (now Sir John) Gorst, the late Colonel Burnaby (of 'Ride to Khiva' fame), Sir A. Slade, Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Hardman, the late Mr. Percy Mitford, Mr. F. D. Dixon Hartland, Sir Henry Hoare, Mr. H. H. Wainwright, Mr. Satchell Hopkins, Mr. F. Seager Hunt, Mr. J. Bateson, Mr. J. B. Stone, and Mr. Hopkinson; the first Grand Councillor was Lord Abergavenny. My daughter, Miss Meresia Nevill, one of the first lady members of the League, took great interest in it from the beginning, and

acted as Treasurer to the Ladies' Grand Council, the initial meeting taking place at Lady Borthwick's in March, 1885. She has ever since continued to be one of its most active workers, and I think I may say that the great success attained by the League in assisting the triumph of Conservative principles and in generally influencing the electorate is in no small measure owing to her untiring efforts to render the League a practical and useful organization. There can be no doubt but that the large body of voluntary workers which the Primrose League puts in the field at elections renders it a weapon of undoubted political worth, for it draws into the fold many voters who, either from carelessness or indolence, would otherwise not trouble their heads about politics.

The Liberals, I believe, at one time attempted to start an organization of a somewhat similar character, with a view to promoting the triumph of their principles, but the effort was not a successful one. Personally, though one of the first members of the Ladies' Grand Council, I am sorry to say I have never manifested anything like the activity or power for organization displayed by my energetic daughter. Indeed, although a Conservative, I have known so many clever Radicals that I harbour no bitterness against their party. The late Lord Sherbrooke—as Mr. Lowe the terror of the Tory party—was a very particular friend of mine, and a most clever and amusing man he was. In private life there was certainly little austerity about him. A violent opponent of Lord Beaconsfield, he would sometimes say dreadful things about that states-

man, at which I could not help laughing. Once, for instance, when the great Tory leader, during a particularly arduous speech, had several times sipped some weak brandy - and - water, Mr. Lowe wrote to me, 'I hope you are proud of your great hero's Bacchanalian feats last night,' and professed himself shocked. Of a very sceptical turn of mind, Mr. Lowe was often stigmatized as an Atheist by his opponents, though, as a matter of fact, in the latter days of his life he became extremely religious. Fond of society, he used to take a somewhat cynical view of it, and would pass judgments upon certain well-known individuals as trenchant as they were terse. His first wife was very delicate, and in consequence they were forced to spend a good deal of time moving about in search of health. This was naturally a great worry to Mr. Lowe ; in November, 1874, he wrote :

'MY DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

'I am sorry that I know nothing about the edelweiss except that people break their necks in trying to get it, and that when it becomes abundant I mean to have a sprig of it in my garden. I never take notice of the flowers with which our modern novels are so abundantly decorated, regarding them as contrivances for spinning out two volumes into three. I have been in Devonshire, Worcestershire, and Nottinghamshire, and believe it to be impossible to move my wife any more this year, so I fear there is no chance of our coming to you. I hope you will consider my epitaph worthy of being placed in the spot for which it is designed.

'I went in pursuance of an intimation or invitation to your house last Monday, after I had had my tooth out, but found no one. Such are the tender mercies of the wicked.

'Dizzy's gout is rather serious, I am told; I believe he thinks but poorly of his own case, so prepare for a Derby administration. I shall be in London on Saturday, and may perhaps call again, but of course you will not be there. You should read Greville's Memoirs—not that they are good, but that everyone talks about them.

'Yours,
'R. L.'

The epitaph mentioned in this letter had been written at my request to place in a little cemetery I had arranged for my dead favourites—dogs and horses which I desired should rest in dignified peace. It ran as follows :

'Soft lie the turf on these who find their rest
Upon our common Mother's ample breast.
Unstained by meanness, avarice, and pride,
They never cheated and they never lied.
No gluttonous excess their slumbers broke,
No burning alcohol nor stifling smoke;
They ne'er intrigued a rival to displace ;
They ran, but never betted on a race.
Content with harmless sports and temperate food,
Boundless in love and faith and gratitude.
Happy the man, if there be any such,
Of whom his Epitaph can say as much.'

Mr. Lowe was the life and soul of any house-party, joining in all amusements and games with the greatest ardour and enjoyment. A fine scholar,

he had a considerable knowledge and love of the classics, many of which he knew by heart ; he was a great admirer of Dr. Jowett, and rightly held a very high estimate of the mental powers of that learned man. I have always thought that Lord Sherbrooke must have possessed quite an exceptional brain, for in him was found a most unusual, rare, and excellent combination of profound learning and political aspiration, together with great power of adaptation to his immediate surroundings, however frivolous. He would devise some deep political move or play billiards with a schoolboy with equal zest, for, devoid of pomposity or affectation, often the unfortunate appanage of so many would-be great men, he knew that real merit is not enhanced by the assumption of ponderous gravity. During the last years of his life he became a confirmed invalid, and nothing was seen of him in the world. He died in 1892.

With Lord and Lady Wolseley I have been on terms of warm friendship for very many years past. I knew Sir Garnet Wolseley, 'our only General,' as he used to be called, some time before the victory of Tel-el-Kebir. A man of culture as well as a soldier, his conversation and letters are best described by saying that they seem to bubble over with vitality. Keen and alert by nature, no one more than he is endowed with the faculty for observing and enjoying everything which is going on around him.

Possessed of an almost boyish gaiety of disposition, which must have been a great support to him during his active and arduous life, Lord Wolseley is essentially a man of action, and one hating shams

of every kind. I fancy that nothing used to annoy him so much as the hide-bound ceremonial which but a short time ago took up so much time in the army ; reviews, inspections, and spectacular and showy manœuvres, I have reason to believe, have, for the most part, been regarded by him with considerable contempt. His one aim during his tenure of active command and direction was always efficiency, and the production of that ideal fighting force which should be 'ready to go anywhere and do anything.' His military career has been a wonderful one, for, entering an army which, as regards armament and equipment, differed but little from those of the eighteenth century, he has lived to see those modern developments in military matters which his keen perception was one of the first to anticipate. I do not believe that Lord Wolseley's efforts to give England a real army have ever been appreciated at their proper worth. The difficulties which confronted him were, indeed, enormous, for tradition and officialdom were two obstacles which hampered him at every step ; but, nevertheless, he succeeded in achieving much that for a less determined man would have been impossible.

In these days he spends much of his time at his peaceful country house at Glynde, near Lewes, where I have so often had occasion to appreciate his delightful hospitality. I must add that Lady Wolseley, a discriminating collector and excellent judge of art, has greatly added to the charm of her home by the exercise of a cultured instinct for everything which is curious and beautiful.

Another very clever woman is Lady St. Helier, whose brilliant mental gifts and special gift of gathering together interesting and remarkable people of every sort and kind are such matters of common knowledge that it would be superfluous for me to speak of them in these pages. Suffice to say that ever since I first met this gifted woman at Raby Castle many years ago I have highly valued and appreciated the friendship which then began. The late Lord St. Helier was one of the most frequent guests at my luncheon-table, where his much lamented death has left a gap which I feel can never be replaced.

Of singular urbanity of manner, any conversation in which he took part, no matter what the subject, at once fell into a pleasant groove. Sad, indeed, is it to think that we shall never hear that kindly voice again.

A picturesque figure, now, alas ! also passed away, was the late Sir Robert Peel, a most attractive personality, whose appearance, to my mind, greatly resembled that of a portrait by Franz Hals. Cheery and buoyant, he retained a boyish exuberance and love of fun to the very end of his days, though, poor man, his unsuccessful career on the turf and other arenas of fortune had given him excellent reason to be sad. All through his life Sir Robert was more or less fond of play, and this passion remained with him up to the very end, though in his last years I fancy he never risked anything but very small sums. He could seldom resist taking part in or having a bet upon any game which he might come across. A little story which I know to be true is a good

illustration of this. A few years before his death, Sir Robert, with one or two friends, happened to be going to the Alexandra Park to witness a balloon ascent, or something of that sort (as a matter of fact, I believe it was a parachute descent by the well-known Professor Baldwin), when, making his way to the grounds, he found himself in close proximity to a man who was doing the three-card trick. Drawing himself up, as he used to do, he said to his companions, ‘I thought this old swindle was extinct ; however’ (with a wink), ‘as we have come across it, I shall expose the rascal.’ He at once proceeded to push himself to the front of the little crowd which stood around the illicit operator, but as soon as he got there his expression softened, and, relenting, he whispered, ‘The poor man is but a sad bungler ; he cannot do the trick at all.’ Soon, however, Sir Robert yielded to the blandishments of the sharper whilst his friends were present (and no money was on), proving completely successful in spotting the court card, which he did almost every time.

The rest of the party, having applauded his skill, said they would walk slowly on to the Palace, which they did ; but, finding after some time that no Sir Robert appeared, someone went back to look for him, and, to his great astonishment, discovered the missing Baronet still in close proximity to the card-sharper, but now in a furious rage, all his money being lost. ‘I ought to convict you,’ he was saying. ‘I am a magistrate, and you, sir (this in his grandest manner, his hat fiercely cocked, and one hand in a Napoleonic pose just

inside his coat)—you, sir, are a rogue, a thief, and a vagabond !

The fact was that Sir Robert, finding he could so easily select the right card when there had been no money on, had not been able to resist taking advantage of what he thought was a good thing, though, as was afterwards demonstrated to his cost, it was in reality an excessively bad one.

A first-class orator and a man of exceptional mental power, Sir Robert's disposition was unfortunately lacking in stability, a defect which was especially apparent throughout his career as a politician. Towards the end of his life he went but little into society, but, notwithstanding this, I saw him pretty frequently, as from time to time he used to make a point of coming to pay me a visit, in order, as he said, to keep up a friendship of very ancient date.

I was often at Hatfield, where, setting aside the wonderful beauty of the grand old house and the charm of its associations, there was, as a rule, an assemblage of the great men and women of the day, which made it a delight to be of the party. Lord and Lady Salisbury and their clever children were a host in themselves, and here truly was a home of intellectual culture and learning. The immense loss which the Conservative party sustained by Lord Salisbury's death is only now (January, 1906), after these last elections, beginning to be realized. I do not think that any of the Cecils are particularly devoted to sport, which is rather odd in view of their descent from the famous Marchioness of Salisbury, who cut such a dashing figure in the hunting-field about

1785, and rode in the Row, it is said, after she was eighty years of age. I believe the only sport in which Lord Salisbury indulged was rabbit-shooting with ferrets, at which he was rather proficient.

I remember a great entertainment at Hatfield given to a number of Irish Conservatives; everything was, as usual, very well done, and the Irishmen were delighted, doing, I may remark, full justice to the champagne; so much was this the case that one of the islanders, approaching Lady Salisbury (of whose identity he was unaware), said, ‘Pray, mam, will ye lead me to a seat, for if I don’t sit down I might disgrace me country?’ She conducted the somewhat tottery son of Erin to a bench, and a calamity was averted.

I was also present at Hatfield when the late Shah of Persia was entertained there. A great garden-party was given in his honour, and the presence of the Persians rendered the scene a very picturesque one. He was a fine old man, a thorough sportsman, I was told, appreciating no gift so highly as some new sort of rifle, and very keen about every kind of sport. Shortly after his last visit to England this poor monarch was assassinated, meeting his death at the hand of a fanatic in the Mosque of Shah Abdul Azim near Tehran. As a matter of fact, I believe he very rarely went to mosque at all, having in Persia something of an Agnostic’s reputation; it therefore seemed doubly hard that, when he did go, he should have been killed.

The old Shah brought a considerable suite with him to Hatfield, including a little boy who was a great favourite of his, and to whom he had given

the rank of Field Marshal in the Persian army. This child had been terribly spoilt, and used to strut about in the most arrogant manner. The reason of Nasreddin's having such an urchin in attendance upon him was that, as a baby, he had saved the Shah's life. On a sporting expedition in the mountains, near Tehran, the old monarch had one day, during a storm, made a halt in a small village, and was eating a meal in one of its houses, when his ears were assailed by a tremendous squalling and howling outside the door. Eventually, his interest being aroused, he went out to ascertain what this noise could be. No sooner was he without the door when the roof of the house was blown in, completely wrecking the room which he had just left. Attributing the salvation of his life to the baby who had lured him to safety, the Shah determined to adopt it, and this he did, heaping every sort of honour upon its head. The little creature attended most of the public functions held in the Royal visitor's honour, and used, at State banquets, to give a great deal of trouble to those seated next him by attempting to plunge his hands into their plates. In appearance the boy was anything but attractive, whilst his manners, owing to no one having dared to correct him, were non-existent.

I think that I have before mentioned that, when travelling on the Continent as a child, I remember our carriage being hoisted up on to a sort of truck. This was also done in England at the time when railways were first introduced, people of means and position thus performing their journeys inside their own carriages.

This custom, however, did not last very long, and was, I believe, ended by a distressing accident. The Lady Zetland of that time was proceeding to the North in her private chariot (hoisted on to a truck, as I have described), and accompanied by her maid, when a large cotton umbrella, strapped on the back of the carriage, swung loose from its moorings, and its folds in consequence began to flap wildly in the breeze. Presently a wandering engine spark set fire to the umbrella, the flame being fanned into a blaze by the rapid motion of the train. The strange and penetrating heat soon revealed to the inmates of the carriage the critical position in which they were placed. The maid was on the instant excited into frenzy, but her mistress, while fully alive to the emergency, retained complete presence of mind, and did her utmost to reason the distracted woman into remaining seated, by pointing out that they were about to reach a station, where immediate rescue was assured.

Persuasion and argument were, however, impotent to restrain the demented creature, who, tearing open the door, flung herself out upon the line, across which she lay in prostrate unconsciousness. One minute later the station was reached, and Lady Zetland was taken safely from the cushions, whose stuffing had up to that time intercepted the fire which threatened to reach her. An engine was at once despatched in quest of the maid, whose motionless figure the engine-driver easily discerned. She was lying clear of the rails, but the engine-driver most unhappily failed to observe that her two arms

were stretched out over the side-line by which he was approaching, and the terrible result of this inadvertence was that, in drawing up the engine quite close, in order to raise the inanimate form, both the poor girl's hands were accidentally cut off at the wrists. It is scarcely necessary to add that everything possible was done to lighten the victim's burden of lifelong suffering.

Amongst the many pleasant country houses at which I have stayed, I shall never forget Warwick Castle, where I have spent some most agreeable days with that clever woman, Lady Warwick. I cannot, however, help regretting that one of such exceptional intellect should lend her aid to the somewhat blatant, if earnest, agitation which, contemptuous of the iron laws governing human nature, seeks to create an immediate but impossible Utopia.

CHAPTER XXII

A delightful hostess—Lady Palmerston—Recollections of past days—George Payne—Serjeant Merewether and others—My old diary—General Cadogan—My ancestress, Mrs. Oldfield—Researches into her history—My grandmother—Her account of evenings passed with George III. and Queen Charlotte at Windsor — Her description of Garrick's funeral—A party at Ranelagh—‘I think I shall.’

THE most pleasant parties I ever remember were those given by Lady Palmerston in Piccadilly. The house is now the Naval and Military Club. Everything was beautifully done, and one was sure to meet there all the most pleasant and clever people in London. The story of people going uninvited to these parties is a well-known one, as is also Lady Palmerston’s reply : ‘ Well, I hope they enjoy themselves ! ’ Certain it is that she knew of the occasional presence of uninvited guests, and was not in any way annoyed by it ; her good-nature, indeed, was inexhaustible.

There is no doubt that at many great entertainments and balls uninvited guests obtain admission. I recollect so well a ball at Grosvenor House in the time of the late Duke and Duchess of Westminster at which a great commotion was caused by a rather gentlemanlike person whom nobody knew. Inquiries

were made, and the detectives always present on such occasions were consulted. Eventually the Duke of Westminster, approaching the intruder, told him that as he was not an invited guest he must leave. This the stranger seemed reluctant to do, upon which, assisted by the Duke of Sutherland, each taking an arm, the host escorted this man out of the ballroom.

Born in 1787, Lady Palmerston had known many people whose names loom large in history—amongst them the Princess Lieven, Pozzo di Borgo and Talleyrand. Her mother was Lady Melbourne, one of the few people who had influence over Byron, who, speaking of her in 1813, said : ‘She is the best friend I ever had in my life, and the cleverest woman.’ Again, in 1818, he wrote : ‘The time is past when I could feel for the dead, or I should feel for the death of Lady Melbourne, the best, the kindest, the ablest female I ever knew, old or young.’

Lady Palmerston had received a good education, whilst no attempt had been made to produce a blue-stocking. At that time the aims of a young lady’s bringing-up were gracefulness and the possession of accomplishments ; nor were attempts made to crowd the memory with a number of different studies (for the most part imperfectly assimilated), as is the case at the present day. The result, I think, of the old-fashioned method was the more free development of the natural faculties, and consequent development of individuality ; nowadays young ladies seem all more or less to have been cast in the same mould.

Lady Palmerston retained her vivacity and liveli-

ness of nature up to advanced age, and when over eighty appeared to manifest much the same interest in everything as a young woman. To Lord Palmerston* she was ever a devoted wife, lavish of attention and care. At night, when he was away at the House of Commons, she would sit up awaiting his return, and for this reason it is probable that his death actually prolonged her life, for the anxieties attaching to her husband's political career bore so heavily upon her that they were impairing her health. With her death, in 1869, passed away one of the last of those great ladies of England which the modern world does not know how to produce.

Looking back through the long vista of many years, what a countless procession of figures seem to fit by in the magic lantern of memory, some of them clearly defined and lifelike, others (far more numerous) in shadow-like mistiness that precludes the indiscretion of individual nomenclature !

There was George Payne, who dropped his worldly means broadcast into the treacherous quicksand which is euphemistically known under the name of the Turf. In some respects, perhaps, not altogether a very shining light, he was always unruffled and pleasant in conversation, with great aptitude of speech for extrication from any awkward situation. 'Are you not coming to church, Mr. Payne?' was on one occasion the stern interrogation of his hostess,

* Lord Palmerston is said to have first been engaged to Miss Anne Russell, daughter of that Sir Henry Russell who acquired 'Swallowfield,' in Berkshire, an account of which has been written by Lady Russell, whose aptitude for antiquarian research renders this book a valuable contribution to County history.

a very great lady, who descended upon him in all the severity of her Sabbath panoply. ‘No, Duchess; I am not,’ he replied, making swiftly for the door, but pausing, as by a polite afterthought, previous to his exit, he exclaimed with magnificent emphasis, ‘Not that I see any *harm* in it.’

Who of those who knew him can fail to remember the charm and cleverness of a certain gorgeously-dressed Peer of whom it was once wickedly said (I must add, with more wit than justice) that ‘he had the manners of an Italian organ-grinder, together with the morals of his monkey’?

An amusing retort was the one attributed to a very rich landowner in the North, whose nephew and heir had been remonstrating with him on the Spartan rigour of his life, and his reluctance to spend the smallest sum upon personal enjoyment or even comfort.

‘Look at me,’ said the latter; ‘I am a poor man, yet I never dream of grudging myself the little things which you consider such extravagant luxuries.’ ‘Ah, but remember,’ replied the uncle, ‘your case and mine are totally different: for you, sir, have expectations!'

Many years ago a well-known character of high and just repute, in both London and the West of England, was the late Serjeant Merewether, whose brilliant mental gifts made him welcome in the few houses that his heavy pressure of overwork allowed him to frequent. His conversation, wittily original without affectation, and pregnant with information without pedantry, invested with its peculiar charm every topic on which he touched,

and kept free from all taint of personal malice and bitterness his keen political proclivities. As an able Conservative ally, his assistance was much sought after at elections, and on one such occasion, in the now only dimly remembered days of open voting, he arranged to journey down within reach of the scene of contest with one of the two great magnates of the district. On the same day, as it chanced, the other great personage, also much interested in the election, but of opposite politics, had secured a compartment in that identical train, and his wife, before entering the carriage, falling in with Mr. Merewether, was naturally hailed by him with the question : ‘What are you going to do with your borough?’ ‘Do with it?’ she replied ; ‘why, carry it, of course!’—a haphazard answer based on the sound old principle ‘when in doubt play a trump,’ which was received with an incredulous shake of the head. At the final station, before reaching their respective destinations, the two parties again collided, and Mr. Merewether’s severe remark, ‘I don’t hear your information confirmed elsewhere,’ was met by the Parthian shot, ‘*Qui vivra verra.*’ In its issue this stiffly-fought battle bore out the random prophecy of the bold Cassandra, who thereupon could not resist sending into the enemy’s quarter a tiny trumpet-blast to this effect : ‘Dear Mr. Merewether, allow me to call your attention to the state of our poll at 4 p.m., and may I suggest an extension into some grades of the peerage of David’s well-considered caution respecting the trust to be accorded to Princes.’ The next day’s letter-bag brought forth the following impromptu rejoinder :

‘DEAR LADY,

‘Let me thank you for your note and reference to my favourite poet, for which I make this unworthy return :

‘By close device and wily tricks
A victory may be snatched,
But never count your little chicks
Before they’re safely hatched.

‘Petitioning for his daily seat
The Righteous I have seen,
Also the wicked prospering
Like to the Bay-tree green.

‘And when before the Five they come
Who in Committee sit,
The good man goes rejoicing home,
The bad man to the Pit !’

In this case, however, the hatching was secure and the committee visionary.

Merewether’s overflowing sense of humour inclined him to chafe a little during the dull length of City functions, which it came within his province to attend. At one of these great banquets, arriving unavoidably late, he took his place at a corner of the long table next to an unknown individual of heavily prosperous aspect, whose name his alert ear soon discovered to be ‘Tompkins.’ Watching his opportunity, it was not long before the Serjeant, entering into conversation with his neighbour, said to him in tones of gentle reproach : ‘Oh, Tompkins, why have you forgotten me ? Is this the way to treat an old friend ?’ The startled Tompkins, under such an unprovoked sally, at once lost such modicum of wits as served him in daily life, and, succumbing instead of

rising to the situation, floundered into a quagmire of protestations, apologies, and regrets, all of which Merewether magnanimously accepted, and continued to play his victim on the same line, prefacing imaginary past scenes with an appealing ‘Don’t you remember?’ entrapping the poor bewildered man into statements to which he found himself with visible anguish inextricably committed. The end of the repast closed a farce which might have become a tragedy, and they parted with a final promise, exacted by Merewether, and at any rate truthfully undertaken by Tompkins, never in future to let slip from his memory a name which that wretched individual had lacked either the courage or the perception to ascertain.

A great favourite with our elders, until taken from this world in 1849 (if memory betrayeth not), was a certain Lady Charlotte Lindsay (of the House of Guildford by birth), whose unchanging amiability and exceptional charm of mind and manners, entirely outweighed with her friends an almost equally exceptional plainness of face and figure. Her own strong consciousness of these physical shortcomings never embittered either heart or tongue, and she not infrequently amused intimate associates with droll accounts of little incidents to which they had given rise. One of these occurred during a solitary stroll in the Mall, when she was suddenly accosted by an unknown gentleman, who, with hat in hand, exclaimed: ‘Oh, Lady Caroline, how glad I am to meet you! But, dear me! how terribly ill you are looking! What can be the matter?’ To whom she, politely curtseying, made answer: ‘Sir, my name is

not Lady Caroline, but Lady Charlotte, and I can assure you that, whatever you may think of my appearance, I am looking my very best this morning.'

Then, there were hostesses and other ladies of fashion whose peculiarities provoked sundry criticisms in their own spheres of action. One of these was declared to fill her rooms with guests 'as closely packed as the dwellers in the ark, and not nearly so well paired.' Another, of clever but endless loquacity, had her conversation earmarked as 'like Johnson's Dictionary—full of information, but a little disconnected.' Yet another popular matron, finding herself, although rather advanced in middle age, likely to add one more shaft to an already well-garnished quiver of family arrows, declined an invitation in the country on the ground that 'about that time she was expecting the arrival of a very near relation whom she had never seen.'

And last, but in his own estimation certainly not least, amongst minor celebrities of different classes comes an individual for years an oracle in Paris—Worth, the Englishman who ruled as dictator of costume and dress during the prosperous days of the second empire. His decrees were as despotic as the old Spartan codes, though far from emulating their simplicity or the undeviating fixity of the famous laws which governed the Medes and Persians.

He reappeared in apparently uninjured prosperity once the disasters of the Franco-German War were over, as if not inappropriately to prove that unchanging law of Nature which sternly decrees the 'survival of the fitter rather than the fitted.'

In my old diary, kept in the forties, which I came across a short time ago, I found some notes which made me wish that I had written down my impressions at greater length in those far-away days. In 'My Journal Book,' begun May 1, 1840, I find :

'*Ilsington, Saturday.*—We met in the village Mr. Woolford, the owner of the sapient pig; he was trumpeting "Rory O'More."

'*London, May 5.*—Went to Covent Garden Theatre with Major, Mrs., and Miss Mitchell to see "Love in a Village" and "The Sleeping Beauty." The last I like very much. When we came home from the theatre we heard that papa's horse was third in the £2,000 stakes, and that Lord G. Bentinck's Crucifix had won. This is indeed sad news.'

'*Wednesday, June 3.*—To-day is the Derby at Epsom. Papa went yesterday to see it to-day. He has got a very fine horse in the race. It is not as yet named; it is called after its mother, Angelica: it goes by the name of Angelica Colt.'

'Angelica has lost the Derby. Mr. Robertson's Little Wonder won it. Angelica was the seventeenth.'

'*Saturday, June 4.*—Papa is going to give us each an allowance for everything—me £45 a year and Rachel £50.'

'*Thursday.*—Richard and Algernon West came and had dinner (lunch) with us. I went out afterwards with papa to a farm of Mr. Tattersall's to see

some horses come home. Rachel, mamma, and I had dinner at the Wests.'

The Wests were our cousins, and as children we saw a great deal of them. Alas! death has snatched all but one of that family away, the sole survivor being Sir Algernon West, whose distinguished public career is so well known. A few years ago he gave us two volumes of pleasant and interesting recollections.

The following extracts are taken from my diaries of 1846-1847 :

'Went to the Drawing-Room. R. presented me. I wore a ribbed silk train, tarlatan double petticoat, trimmed with blush roses, body to correspond; headdress, feathers, Valenciennes lace lappets, and a wreath of blush roses. In the evening went to an evening party at Madame Dietrichstein's (Austrian Minister), and afterwards to a small dance at Lady Londonderry's. Danced three times Lord Seaham, once Lord Goderich, once Lord Adolphus Vane, once Lord Keane. Came home early.'

'Mr. Scarlett came to see us. In the evening dined at Mr. Disraeli's. Met Count D'Orsay, Lord Harry Vane, Mrs. Maberley, Lord and Lady Ponsonby, Lord Brooke, Lord Ossulston, and Lord Duncannon.'

'Drove with papa and mamma to a nursery-garden in Chelsea. Went to the exhibition; saw Mr. and Mrs. D'Israeli. Young Wolff (Sir Henry Drummond

Wolff) called on us. In the evening went to the Adelphi to see Jenny Lind.'

'Went down with Rachel (my sister, married to Lord Pollington) and Duke of Beaufort to Woolwich, then went in his yacht, the *Intrepid*, down to Gravesend, were becalmed, obliged to wait for a steamer to tug us up to Woolwich, whence we drove back to London.'

Fancy yachting at Woolwich nowadays !

'Was to have gone and seen the review and a déjeuner afterwards at Mr. Disraeli's, but as it rained there was none. At two went by a special train with R. and P. down to Cashiobury (Lord Essex's) to a déjeuner and dinner there afterwards ; drove in a pony-chaise to Swiss Cottage. R. and I were both overturned. There were a great many people, and we spent a delightful day.'

At that time déjeuners were exceedingly popular, and there are many mentions of them in my diary.

'Breakfasted at Mr. Rogers' (the banker poet). Went to Lady Salisbury's drum after supper at the Sayers'.'

'Started with R. (my sister Rachel) and R. Nevill in a postchaise and four horses at half-past eleven. Went through Salisbury, Woodgates, near Blandford, stopped half an hour, started through Blandford, Ringwood to Southampton, where we slept. Started at three, got to the Cottage at five on Good Friday.'

'Forgot that we breakfasted with Mr. Rogers. Met the three Cadogans, Tom Moore, Stafford O'Brian, G. Smythe, Lord Goderich.'

'Papa came from Newmarket. At two went with the Wests to Mr. Warburton ; met Hochelaga (a nickname for Mr. Warburton's brother), Prince Louis Napoleon, Prince Lewinstein, Lord Morton, Lord Goderich (the present Lord Ripon), Miss Pattle (Lady Somers, who is still living), Mrs. and Miss Antrobus, Mr. Talbot. Charming party. Afterwards to see Mr. Solly's pictures and to C. Russell. Had an invitation to Lady Brougham's dance.'

Had luncheon with the Cadogans, a drum at Mrs. Wyndham's, afterwards a ball at Uxbridge House (Lady Ailesbury's). Danced first quadrille, Lord Goderich ; second, Lord Henley. I was engaged to Lord Goderich, but there was none. First waltz, Prince Lieven ; second, Lord Duplin ; third, Lord Henry Lennox. Cotillon, Lord G. Paget. Polka, G. Cadogan.'

The G. Cadogan in question afterwards became General Cadogan, and I used to see a good deal of him, for he was a sort of relation of mine. His sister was Lady Augusta Cadogan, who had a considerable reputation as an amateur artist. General Cadogan was a very amusing man, and, besides sketching very nicely, had the knack of writing amusing letters in quite an original style. A Christmas greeting from him will show his talent in this direction.

' 13, PARK PLACE,
' ST. JAMES'S.

' Saturday.

' MY DEAR D.

' If I am made to suffer Christmas I do not see why you should be let off, and so pray consider yourself and Reginald duly *wished* into the middle of next year. I hope you do not flatter yourself that I ever think of you except when something or other forcibly reminds me of your existence. Being nineteenth cousins, there is still a tinge of relationship that makes civility unusual, and therefore unadvisable, so that, for fear of misconception, let me explain that the Drummond Wolff's graced my festive board yesterday, and it is thus that your microscopic individuality occurred to me as a fitting victim for the tortures of the season—that and an idyll that arose out of the feast itself, which is worthy of a place in the family archives and which I am bursting to pour into appreciative ears.

' The fair Lady Augusta received a present of a Norfolk turkey from Orford's Earl, a fact to be recorded to his credit at the last reckoning. This turkey was big, so big that the Lady opined it would take twelve men, stout and true, to consume it. Visions floated in the mind of the Lady of a banquet to be held in someone else's halls on the broad basis of the monster.

' What its adventures were before it was proposed to my humble self I grieve not to be able to narrate, for I feel sure the tale would be interesting ; suffice it to say, that I offered hospitality to the Lady, but deprecated the twelve guests, recommending un-

poetically that the giant should be swopped for future fowls. At length a varlet brought a message : “ The Lady would come and send the bird.” Later another page spurred hotly in with, “ Would I make it Christmas Eve, to leave the feast-day clear for other chances ? ” “ No, I could not. I had written to my spouse in distant lands, and, better than my word, I had written to the four quarters of the globe for guests.” The day came, and very late in it the biped, who had been detained, to our great anxiety, under pretext of being plucked. When it did come, I felt ashamed of myself for having for a moment suspected the hope of a better investment. The banquet took place ; the plain cook lay fainting on the kitchen flags ; but the deed was done, the guests departed, and it was discovered that the Lady A. had taken away the remains of the turkey in a napkin. Tableau !

‘ On making the discovery someone remarked that this was *carrying a turkey too far.*

‘ I have had to pacify my outraged household with another bird, and shall be for ever after a sadder but a wiser man.

‘ In the course of the negotiations I sent A. a sketch illustrative of my state of mind, which I here reproduce ; but I must do something more serious in the pre-Raphaelite style illustrative of the whole story, with its thrilling vicissitudes.

‘ And now what will you tell me that will equal in interest this soul-stirring epic ! Clearly nothing ; therefore merely tell me what you are about and when you are coming up to town, and, above all, reward me by your discretion.

‘I met your friend the *Dook* the other day at the chief Baron’s with a galaxy of legal magnates. The evening ended by his Grace adjourning with myself and the Chief Justice to the latter dignitary’s house in Hertford Street, there to discuss, over whisky-and-water till the small hours how General Cadogan could be most conveniently murdered with the least chance of legal evidence being producible. Need I say by whom the question was propounded? My spouse has just turned up safe, which is saying a great deal, seeing she came by the *Great Western*. She begs her kindest regards to you all; the girls embrace you and Meresia, who, they say, is not with you just now. I have not begun the china-painting yet. Shall I illustrate the turkey story on a dessert-service?

‘Yours affectionately,
‘G. CADOGAN.’

A clever sketch of a phantom turkey disturbing the General’s slumbers accompanied this letter.

Like his sister, he painted very prettily in water-colours, and I possess a letter from him with an ornamental border, which is quite a little gem in its way. General Cadogan was a sort of connection of mine, through both of us being direct descendants of Mrs. Oldfield, Pope’s Narcissa, my great-great-grandmother, whose burial in Westminster Abbey created a considerable stir.

“‘Odious in woollen, ‘t would a saint provoke,’
Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke.’

I have always taken the warmest interest in the

history of Mrs. Oldfield, and collect all prints and books throwing any light upon her life and appearance. My cousin Sir Henry Drummond Wolff thought of writing a little volume about her, and I promised to do all I could to assist him in his researches into the history of our ancestors.

I asked Sir Henry Irving whether he could supply any information from his vast store of theatrical knowledge; but, though he did his best, he could supply no additional details about poor Narcissa's life, as the following will show:

‘15a, GRAFTON STREET,
‘BOND STREET, W.

‘DEAR LADY DOROTHY,

‘The records of Mrs. Oldfield seem to be very few, and the old book I sent I thought a straggling sort of affair; but in the Doran and the dictionary, if Sir Drummond has not seen them, he may find some interesting material.

‘He has probably studied Ellen Terry's Nance, which, I am sure, excels the original.

‘Such a harmonious and graceful piece of work the stage has seldom seen, and I am sure, dear Lady Dorothy, you agree with me.

“‘I would like to see her slide off that sofa for a week,” said Aldrich, the American poet, “for I am sure that some night she must make a mess of it.”

‘By the way, Bailey Aldrich (a delightful man) is coming to have supper with us to-night at the Lyceum. I suppose I could not persuade you and Miss Nevill to come too, and to bring Sir Drummond

with you? It would be delightful if it were possible.

‘Believe me,

‘Dear Lady Dorothy,

‘Sincerely yours,

‘H. IRVING.’

‘*July 9, 1891.*’

Miss Terry also did her best, lending me a book which she had purchased when studying for her charming impersonation of Nance Oldfield. However, owing to lack of material, we never made any substantial progress. Finally, application was made to another descendant of the eighteenth century player—a lady whose ancestor had, like Brigadier General Churchill, basked in her smiles, to inquire whether she could supply any material for his work; but the reply he received was so discouraging that he decided to abandon writing the book. The lady in question wrote back that she knew nothing and cared less about the history of ‘that disreputable woman’—a somewhat stern and Puritanical way of alluding to the memory of poor Nance.

For myself, setting as I do a high value upon cleverness and wit, qualities not over-abundant in this vale of tears, I think with nothing but tenderness of my pretty, witty ancestress,

‘Fashioned alike by Nature and by Art
To please, engage, and interest every heart.’

Mrs. Oldfield’s son by Brigadier-General Churchill (General Churchill) became the husband of Sir Robert Walpole’s natural daughter, Lady Mary

Walpole. Of this marriage two daughters were born, one of whom married a Cadogan, whilst the other became the wife of the Hon. Horatio Walpole, afterwards Lord Walpole of Wolterton, and after his wife's death Earl of Orford. This Horatio Walpole was my grandfather, and I am consequently the granddaughter of Mrs. Oldfield's grandchild, Sophia Churchill. Quite recently the latter's diary, together with other family papers, have been replaced in the library at Wolterton, where, as has been mentioned, my nephew and Lady Orford (like most of her American countrywomen, enthusiastic about relics of the past) have done their best to restore the fine old Georgian mansion to its original state. Here also is a correspondence of considerable interest to those who, like my friend Mr. Andrew Lang, are fond of investigating the plots and risings of the Jacobites.

A certain Mr. Edward Edlin, a gentleman holding an official position in Scotland, 1746-1749, had been an old college friend of the first Lord Walpole of Wolterton, and his letters describing the state of the Highlands as it appeared to him, together with various suggestions for their pacification, have been carefully preserved.

In one of these letters he says, speaking of the clans : 'There is hardly a family among them that hath not a sword and target delivered down from father to son in memory of some great exploit done with them in some of their feuds.'

Another time Mr. Edlin writes of Lord Lovat and how he was wont, in the hall before dinner, to have a kind of herald proclaiming his pedigree, which, he

adds, ‘reached almost up to Noah, and showed each man present to be a cadet of his family, whilst after dinner he drank to every one of his cousins by name, each of them in return pledging him—the better sort in French claret, the lower class in husky (whisky).’ Clanship the writer regarded as a great evil, and one, indeed, hardly curable. ‘The whole Highlands,’ he writes, ‘speak Erse and wear plaids, which distinguish them from the rest of mankind. Obliging them to conform both in habit and language would, I believe, contribute to weaken clanship.’

In Lord Walpole’s correspondence with his brother, Sir Robert, there are also many references to the Jacobites and the spies employed to watch them, a man called ‘Bonin’ being frequently mentioned as acting in this latter capacity. Lord Walpole, when Ambassador to Louis XV.,* wrote perpetually to his brother. The following was his opinion of the young King :

‘ FONTAINEBLEAU,
‘ November 14, 1727.

‘ DEAR BROTHER,

‘ Mr. Hill, who set out yesterday for England, will have ye honour of giving you an account of the pleasures of this Court, and particularly of their hunting in the forest, and ye great zeal and attention of his M.C. Majesty to this laudable diversion,

* The beautiful picture of Louis XV., by Van Loo, which the young King presented to the Ambassador, is now in the collection of Colonel Walpole, of Heckfield Place, Hampshire, who also possesses some curious English tapestry representing a sea-fight. This was originally at Ilssington.

from which, I am sure, you will presage his being in time a great monarch. I must add that I have from other reasons had that opinion of him, for although he is not so lively as is agreeable and usual to ye French temper, yet he was never heard to say a silly thing, and he always laughs in ye right place.

‘Yours most affectionately,
‘H. WALPOLE.’

Sophia Churchill's diary as a girl of about eighteen contains many interesting comments upon the current events of her day. Here is, for instance, a lengthy account of a well-known murder, that of Martha Rae by a young man called Hackman, who had wished to marry her.

‘Last night Wednesday the 7th. of April 1779 Miss Ray (or Wray) was shot to death coming out of Covent Garden Theatre (the play Love for Love) by a young man that had been in the army and had left it for the Church. He had proposed to her 4 years ago but she refused being with Lord Sandwich as his Mistress and having many children by him which go by his name.’

After a long description of the exact circumstances of the crime as described by those on the spot, the writer proceeds :

‘Friday night April the 9th 1779. My father saw him this morn : in Newgate and declared that he never saw anything to come nearly up to the shockingness of the scene, he was before Sir John

Fielding this morn and everybody there crying even the judges cd not read a letter that had been found upon him wrote to Miss Wray without a date.' The tears of the judges, however, in no way caused them to waver in their determination that stern justice should be done, for after mentioning that 'he is not above 26 years of age very well made and has a handsome face,' she concludes : 'He made it a request that leave sd be asked of Ld Sandwich that he might be buried by Miss Wray—I cannot go on for I am so thoroughly shocked at all I have heard of it that I am not myself at all.'

Sophia Churchill, though she says that the study of music bores her, as she prefers to amuse herself, was a good player on the harp. There are frequent references to her playing before George III. and his Queen, with whom she was a great favourite.

'Monday Aug^t ye 17th 1778 past ye Evening with the King and Queen at Windsor and played on the Harpe and sang also the Prince of Wales Prince Frederick and all the little Princes and Princesses were there. Ly Waymouth was there and in waiting Ly Char: Finch Miss Hamilton Mrs. Bloodworth and about ten men or more with all the childrens attendants. Suffered very much from fright it prevented Mama and I going to the play which we were to have been at with the Egertons and Humes, but the instant it was over Mama and I walked down to the Playhouse were we just came time enough for the farce that was Chrononhotonthologos A Comic Tragedy we went to the G-n at 7 o'clock

and came away at $\frac{1}{2}$ past ten—Play'd all the time the Princes and Princesses were delighted.'

On a subsequent occasion the writer appears to have been more at her ease.

'Tuesday Sept. ye 22 1778. Past the evening with the King and Queen at the Queen's Lodge Windsor play'd on the Harpe but was not near so frightened as the 1st. time—Prince of Wales Prince Frederick and all the little ones were there—thought P. of Wales was very attentive to M—s H—n. My sister say'd not, we shall see which was the right—like P. of W. better much than P. F.'

Of Garrick's death and funeral she writes :

'David Garrick Esq. died this morning, January the 20th 1778—62 years of age, without pain, at his quarters after seven o'clock in the morning—a great man gone.

'Monday 2 o'clock 1st. February 1779 he (the above) was bury'd in Westminster Abbey, I saw the procession from out of the windows of the Banqueting House his hearse was follow'd by 35 mourning coaches, with 6 horses each, Coachman Postillion etc., some with two footmen, all the mourners' coaches follow'd empty and all their Coachmen and Footmen had Hat Bands and Gloves, it is supposed to have cost £1000 or £2000. My father was in the procession as a friend. He is sayd to be dead worth £100000 he has left Mrs. Garrick £1500 a year if she remains in England and £1000 if she

goes abroad, his house on the Royal Terrace Adelphi and at Hampton besides £6000 to do what she pleases with besides that Ld. Camden has found out an article in the will that intitles her to one half or a third of his whole fortune. I fear by all accounts that she is not so afflicted as one could wish—she receives it as a stroke from Heaven.'

The three last entries in this diary run as follows:

'I was at Ranelagh the 9th of this month July 1779 with a pleasant party that is to say part of it—Ly Hertford Ly Eliza and Ly Isa Conway Miss Foster Mama and myself—the men were Ld Westport Ld Palmerston Mr. Cartwright Mr. Walpole Mr. G. Ellis and my father, we went out of town the Sunday after, this was on the Friday before, I hardly ever, nay never past such an evening as it was cruel and pleasant at the same time.'

'Jan. ye 18th. 1780. The World says I am to marry one of the above named gentlemen but I don't think I ever shall.'

'Nov. ye 18th. 1780. I think I shall.'

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